HIERARCHY AND DOMINION

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AN ECONOMIC COMMENTARY ON I TIMOTHY

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Hierarchy and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on I Timothy

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Who understands Christian education as dominion

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INTRODUCTION

> *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*
>
> I TIMOTHY 2:5–6

Jesus Christ established the definitive operational model for covenant-keeping man to fulfill the terms of the dominion covenant (Gen. 1:26–28).[1] This model is dominion through hierarchy. Christ serves as a judicial intermediary between God and man, on behalf of both. He is simultaneously the high priest (Heb. 2:17), the head of the church (Col. 1:18), the King of kings (Rev. 17:14), and the bridegroom (Luke 5:34–35).

A. Trinitarian Theology of Hierarchy

Jesus Christ is both God and man. As God, He is the Second Person of the Trinity, the son of God (Mark 14:61–62). As man, He was born perfect, and He did not sin. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21).

In His capacity as God, the Second Person of the Trinity, the ruler over creation (Col. 1:10–17), Jesus Christ has provided mankind and the world with unmerited grace, i.e., gifts in history that are unmerited by the covenantally disinherited sons of Adam. On this basis, redemption comes to former covenant-breakers. "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in

1. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), chaps. 3, 4.

your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight" (Col. 1:20–22).

In His capacity as a perfect man who was completely subordinate to God (Luke 22:42), He offered God a suitable sacrifice to propitiate God's wrath and thereby make grace judicially possible (Heb. 10). By voluntarily humbling Himself before God and man at Calvary, Christ enabled God the Father to exalt Him above heaven and earth in His capacity as perfect man. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). As God, He had possessed this power before the incarnation. As man, He gained it through complete subordination to God and man in history. *His absolute subordination in history produced His absolute dominion over history*. This is the covenant-keeper's ethical model, Paul taught.

> Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:5–12).[2]

There is rulership: Christ as God. There is subordination: Christ as God-man (the incarnation). There was subordination in history: doing God the Father's business, which included the cross. This led to even greater rulership for the supreme representative of perfect humanity: Christ's bodily resurrection and His bodily ascension to the right hand of God.

> Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God (Luke 22:69).

> Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:31).

2. Gary North, *Ethics and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on the Epistles* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 20.

> Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us (Rom. 8:34).

Christ's judicially representative, hierarchical work in history on behalf of covenant-keeping mankind (special grace's regeneration) and also on behalf of the fallen world (common grace's preservation)[3] provides the working model for covenant-keepers in exercising dominion. Christ's sending of the Holy Spirit has enabled covenant-keepers to understand this model.

> But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:26).

> But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning (John 15:26–27).

> Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you (John 16:7–14).

The Spirit's empowerment of covenant-keepers has enabled them to implement this model.

> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and **greater works than these shall he do**; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. If ye love me, **keep my commandments**. And I will pray the Father, and **he shall give you another Comforter**, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for **he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you** (John 14:12–17).

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3. Gary North, *Dominion and Common Grace: The Biblical Basis of Progress* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987).

The Holy Spirit is subordinate to God the Father. He intervenes on behalf of God the Son, i.e., in His name. It is through the Holy Spirit that covenant-keepers extend God's kingdom in history. They are under the Holy Spirit, who in turn is under God the Father on behalf of Christ. There is a cosmic hierarchy: from the throne of God through the Holy Spirit through the institutional church through the saints over the creation. To rule lawfully over the creation, covenant-keepers must subordinate themselves to this hierarchy.

I cannot imagine that anything that I have written so far in this Introduction is theologically controversial among Bible-believing Christians.[4] There should be nothing unfamiliar with these basic theological concepts. If there is, then the reader's theological education is limited.

All of this has to do with hierarchy, which is point two of the biblical covenant.[5] (Now things begin to get controversial.)

Paul's first epistle to Timothy develops this theme of hierarchy in several areas of theology and social theory. The epistle's focus is ecclesiastical hierarchy.

B. Biblical Law and Dominion

The epistle begins with a warning against false teachers in the church at Ephesus and a command that Timothy instruct them in the tenets of the orthodox faith. He tells Timothy to shift the Ephesian church's public discussion from genealogy to law. He places God's law—Mosaic civil statutes—at the foundation of this mandatory curriculum in orthodoxy. He places God's Biblical law at the heart of the gospel.[6]

> But we know that **the law is good**, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to **sound doctrine**; According to the **glorious gospel** of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust (I Tim. 1:8–11).

Here we find an affirmation of certain Mosaic civil laws as guidelines for assessing the presence of God's grace in a man's life. Cov-

4. This excludes members of the Calvinistic, Dutch-related Protestant Reformed Church, who reject Calvin's concept of common grace.

5. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 2.

6. Chapter 1.

enant-keepers are supposed to define their subordination to God through grace as inherently judicial: *the avoidance of these prohibited practices*. Covenant-keepers are under grace, not law, and the mark of their not being under law is their lawful avoidance of the Mosaic law's sanctions, laws that are enforced by God when not enforced by the state.

Paul is adamant about this law-grace relationship. Covenant-keepers can legitimately be said to be above these Mosaic civil laws, but only because they are not tempted to violate them. *Subordination to God's special grace means being above the temptations relating to law-breaking, through the morally transforming effects of regeneration*. Christians do not come under the law's eternal curse, for Christ has borne the comprehensive penalty of their sins (Rom. 5). But this is a different theological issue altogether from the question of the New Testament authority of God's biblical law and the threat of the law's sanctions in New Testament history. To violate any of these laws in the New Testament era is to place oneself under God's lawful negative sanctions.

It is never a man's choice in history between being under law vs. not being under any law at all. The covenantal judicial question in history is always this: "Whose law and whose sanctions? God's or some rival deity's?" Paul makes clear his answer: biblical law. The Christian who denies this has a great deal of exegetical work to do (1:8–11). Most Christians do deny the continuing authority of God's biblical law and its mandated sanctions, but very few of them have done any detailed exegetical work to defend this viewpoint. They do not even perceive that such exegetical work is necessary. The implicit and, all too often, explicit hostility to God's biblical law in the modern church indicates that the modern church is as offended by this passage as the Judiazers at Ephesus must have been. The modern church refuses to listen to Paul's explicit teaching regarding the law of God's intimate connection to the gospel. It is as if Paul had never written this passage. But he did write it, and God expects His people to believe it and then obey it.

C. Other Applications of the Principle of Hierarchy

Paul then moves to the church's role in performing intercessory prayer for the world. He tells Christians to pray for men in general and for civil rulers specifically. If Christians do this, he says, the church will enjoy greater peace. One price of peace for Christians is their inter-

cessory prayer. Peace is meant to be a tool of dominion for Christians, so that they can work legally to spread the gospel and thereby bring the world progressively under Christ's dominion in history.[7]

Then comes Paul's discussion of monogamy as a requirement for holding church office. How a man rules over his family indicates how he will rule over the church. Do not subordinate yourself, Paul warns, to a man who does not rule his family well. How well his family's subordinates have fared under his rule indicates how you will fare.[8]

Also a consideration for high church office is the candidate's generosity. If he is not generous, beware. He may be a disciple of mammon, the great god More.[9] Much in this epistle is directed against subordination to this immanent god.

Other economic applications—all related to the issue of hierarchy and dominion—are these: the support of widows,[10] the power of ecclesiastical subordinates over their own money,[11] the responsibility of slaves to their masters,[12] the relationship between subordination and liberation,[13] and the proper relationship between rich men and those in need.[14]

This epistle's theme of subordination is foreign to the worldview of modern Christianity. Quite frankly, it has been foreign to Christians, with the exceptions of monks and other celibate religious orders, from the day it was written. I regard this epistle as an extension and application of the gospel of Luke. In that gospel, Christ's warnings against the religion of mammon are more pronounced than in Matthew or Mark. (John's gospel says almost nothing relating to economics, other than observing the predictable relationship between wine-dulled tongues and the serving of cheaper vintages.)

D. The Love of Money

In this epistle, a famous passage appears. "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (6:10). This is an extension of Christ's warning: "No servant can serve

7. Chapter 2.
8. Chapter 3.
9. Chapter 4.
10. Chapter 5.
11. Chapter 6.
12. Chapter 7.
13. Chapter 8.
14. Chapter 9.

two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke 16:13).[15]

The question arises: "If a rich man can be generous to more people than a poor man can, should he seek even greater riches?" This question can be extended to a congregation. There is a hierarchy of wealth within a congregation. There is a hierarchy of wealth among congregations with similar confessions. There is also a hierarchy of wealth among denominations. Episcopalians in the United States are richer per capita than Pentecostals. They are also more liberal theologically. Whether they are more liberal in giving, I do not know.

The ethical issue of what men should do with their money is relevant to the theological issue of the legitimacy of riches. Paul and Jesus warned against the common temptation of riches: to forget God. So did Moses. "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day" (Deut. 8:18).[16] So did Solomon. "Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain" (Prov. 30:8–9).[17] *There is nothing new in the New Testament regarding the moral temptation of riches*. What is new is Jesus' discussion of the consequence of succumbing to this temptation: hell. The former rich man is in hell; the former beggar isn't (Luke 16:19–31).[18] This is the context of Jesus' most extensive discussion of hell. The stakes are much higher than they appeared to be in the Old Covenant.

The moral problem with riches is not the existence of riches; rather, it is the problem of what men do in order to gain riches, and also what they do with their riches after having gained them. The same could be said of power, and has been.

> But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be

15. Gary North, *Treasure and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Luke*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 39.

16. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 18.

17. Gary North, *Wisdom and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Proverbs*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2007] 2012), ch. 85.

18. North, *Treasure and Dominion*, ch. 39.

> among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Mark 10:42–45).

Paul's first epistle to Timothy deals with riches and also the exercise of authority. Both discussions appear in the context of the institutional church. Both discussions relate to hierarchy. Both discussions have implications outside of the institutional church.

E. Covenantal Hierarchy: Transcendent/Immanent

In my previous commentaries, I failed to clarify certain important aspects of the five-point biblical covenant model. Sutton begins his study of the biblical covenant with the observation that God, as an absolute sovereign, is both transcendent and immanent to the creation. God is over history and separate from the creation, yet He has entered history, most obviously at the incarnation.[19]

1. Point Two

I previously failed to identify the five-point covenant as itself having both transcendent and immanent applications: hierarchy, law, sanctions, and continuity. I categorize the covenant itself as primarily an aspect of point two: hierarchy. This is because Exodus, the second book of the Pentateuch, is the book most closely associated with the covenant. "And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient" (Ex. 24:7). I hope that the following material will clarify the distinction between transcendent and immanent applications of the covenant.

Here is my present insight, which I have not presented with equal clarity before. *The hierarchical structure of the biblical covenant is simultaneously vertical and horizontal.* In this sense it manifests both transcendence and immanence. This in turn reflects the simultaneous relationships within the Godhead: vertical (economic Trinity) and horizontal (ontological Trinity). The persons of the Trinity are vertically hierarchical with respect to both creation and redemption, but horizontally equal with respect to their being.

The Greek word for priest (*hierus*) is the root word for hierarchy. A priest was an intermediary who represented God to men and men

19. Sutton, *That You May Prosper*, ch. 1.

to God in the Old Covenant church. He possessed judicial authority. Judicial representation is generally understood as vertical. But there are other manifestations of covenantal representation. These can be horizontal: inner and outer rings of authority.

The biblical covenantal hierarchy applies to individuals and also to three institutions: church, family, and state. Each of these covenants is established by a self-maledictory oath before God. God and men establish a mutual legal bond by oath. Redeemed individuals are, in Meredith Kline's words, by oath consigned.[20] This oath places the individual and the three institutions under God.

One corporate covenantal hierarchy is both vertical and horizontal in both history and eternity: the church.

2. Vertical Hierarchy

I begin my analysis with the individual covenant. Conceptually, the structure of God's *vertical individual hierarchy* of covenantal authority is like the father-son relationship. The individual covenant is a *hierarchy of legal status*: either a son of God by means of adoption or a disinherited son because of Adam's original sin. The covenant is administered representatively: either by Christ or by Adam. Either Christ or Adam is a person's legal representative before God. God deals with an individual judicially by imputing to him either Christ's perfection or Adam's sin.[21] Covenant theologians speak of this judicial representation as *federal headship*. One or the other representative agent has spoken a binding oath before God the Father on behalf of the individual. Judicially, though not literally, Adam spoke on behalf of mankind when he sinned. God the Father spoke on behalf of redeemed individuals in the name of Jesus Christ before time began.

> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love (Eph. 1:3–4).

God makes a covenant with an individual in history, redeeming his soul. God adopts him. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1:5). The individual covenant is marked by

20. Meredith G. Kline, *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1968).

21. John Murray, *The Imputation of Adam's Sin* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian & Reformed, [1959] 1979).

all five points of the biblical covenant. God is the absolute sovereign (point one).[22] He delegates to mankind the responsibility of exercising dominion and stewardship over the earth, beginning with himself: self-government under God's authority (point two).[23] Each man is supposed to use his knowledge of God's law to establish dominion over nature, beginning with himself: self-government under God's law (point three).[24] By obeying the law personally, and by using the law to extend God's kingdom in history, a covenant-keeper identifies himself in history as bound for heaven: a positive sanction. By disobeying God's law, and by enforcing laws associated with Satan's kingdom, a covenant-breaker identifies himself as bound for hell: a negative sanction (point four).[25] These sanctions in history, positive and negative, reflect the sanctions of a post-temporal pair of conditions: heaven and hell (higher and lower), which are in turn foretastes of the re-created New Heaven/ New Earth on the one hand, and the lake of fire on the other (point five).[26]

This structure can be referred to as a *transcendent hierarchy*. It deals primarily with an individual's eternal legal status, though not entirely, for one's legal status is established in history. "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). Individual vertical hierarchy points to eternity: either inheritance or disinheritance.

Conceptually, the structure of God's *vertical corporate hierarchy* of authority is like a pyramid. God the Father is at the top. He rules as a king. Christ sits at His right hand. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34). "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2). This cosmic throne of judgment serves as the model for Christian rulership in history. The judicial evidence of this delegated rulership under Christ is the Lord's Supper, which is a church ritual associated with covenant oath renewal. "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my

22. Sutton, *That You May Prosper*, ch. 1.
23. *Ibid.*, ch. 2.
24. *Ibid.*, ch. 3.
25. *Ibid.*, ch. 4.
26. *Ibid.*, ch. 5.

table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:29–30).[27]

God the Father rules from on high alongside of Christ, who represents perfect humanity, and who is seated at the Father's right hand. God appoints representative agents in church, family, and state. These agents represent those under their authority before God, and also represent God to those under their authority.[28] Representation and authority are aspects of point two of the biblical covenant model: hierarchy. Representatives are required to rule in terms of God's law (point three). They impose sanctions in terms of God's law (point four). In this way, God's kingdom perseveres through time (point five). Corporate continuity through linear time (horizontal) is established by a vertical hierarchy. Put differently, *covenantal dominion outward is empowered by covenantal dominion downward*.

3. Horizontal Hierarchy

This form of hierarchy also has to do with legal status: the identification in history of the legal heirs vs. the disinherited heirs. Who will inherit the earth?

> What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth (Ps. 25:12–13).
>
> For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth (Ps. 37:9).
>
> Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5).[29]

The horizontal covenantal hierarchy is associated with *corporate inheritance in history*: the sons who are meek before God will inherit the earth, thereby disinheriting the sons of Adam. God is at the center (point one). He extends His influence outward, across the earth, through the multiplication of mankind, as He commanded Adam before the Fall and Noah after the Flood (point two). Men are required to use God's law-order to bring more of the earth, both agricultural and social, under God's authority (point three). The sanctions associated with biblical law enable covenant-keepers to extend God's

27. North, *Treasure and Dominion*, ch. 51.

28. Gary North, *Boundaries and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Leviticus*, 2nd ed.(Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1994] 2012), ch. 4.

29. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 4.

kingdom across space and through time and also reduce the influence of Satan's kingdom in history (point four). History is both linear and cumulative: the principle of the leaven (point five). This can be referred to as an *immanent hierarchy*. The inheritance is in history, not just eternity.

> And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life (Mark 10:29–30).

Conceptually, the structure of God's horizonal hierarchy of authority is like a series of concentric circles. In the Bible, the horizontal structure is best seen in the concentric circles of holiness that surrounded the holy of holies (Num. 3). Each of the three clans in the priestly tribe of Levi defended against unlawful intrusion into one of these three circles of holiness: Kohath (inner circle), Gershon (second circle), and Merari (outer circle).[30] Israel, as a nation of priests (Ex. 19:6), mediated between God and the nations. The temple's sacrifices covered the sins of the heirs of Adam, in a common grace sense of covering: restraining the wrath of God in history. The priestly aspect of hierarchy is better understood as horizontal rather than vertical: protecting a holy place. But the vertical element is always present. Even as Jesus sits beside God the Father on a cosmic kingly throne, so does He sit as high priest. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12).

Both aspects of God's hierarchy are equally covenantal, for God is both transcendent and immanent. One aspect of this hierarchy has to do primarily with a man's legal relationship to God (justification). The other aspect has to do primarily with a man's inheritance in history (progressive sanctification). Both aspects culminated in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, who is both man and God, who has His being both in time and eternity. He has already inherited everything in history. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18).[31] On the basis of this *definitive inheritance* as God's law-abiding son, Christ *progressively*

30. Gary North, *Sanctions and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Numbers*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1997] 2012), ch. 3:C.

31. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 48.

inherits the earth through His church, which represents Him. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:19–20). The end of the world will coincide with the defeat of God's enemies in history. Christ will deliver up (vertical) His kingdom to God the Father upon the completion of its geographical extension (horizontal), which involves the subordination (vertical) of covenant-breakers to a covenant-keeping society.

> Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (I Cor. 15:24–28).[32]

As a manifestation of Jesus Christ's transcendence and immanence, the church of Jesus Christ is both transcendent (the church triumphant: heaven) and immanent (the church militant: earth). Unlike Christ's simultaneous dual status in history, a person's participation in one branch of the church precludes simultaneous participation in the other branch until after the final judgment. At that point, ecclesiastical transcendence and immanence will be eternally unified. This post-final judgment ecclesiastical unification will manifest throughout eternity Christ's dual ontological status: God and man, transcendent and immanent.

4. Temporal Hierarchies

We normally think of hierarchies both ways. We say that men seek power by climbing to the top of the pyramid. We also say that men seek power by breaking into the inner circle. We speak of leaders as top dogs. We also speak of them as insiders.

In civil government, magistrates reflect God's original sovereignty. They hold power only by His command. "Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the

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32. Gary North, *Judgment and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), ch. 16.

same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him" (Ezek. 21:26–27). The Old Covenant king's visible temporal throne reflected God's eternal throne. So does the office of civil magistrate in the New Covenant.

Political authority is not sufficient to represent God's hierarchical supremacy. Reflecting God in His kingly status is only part of the picture. God is also priestly. The Ten Commandments reflect this dual status: priestly (1–5) and kingly (6–10).[33] This is why every Old Covenant king had priests, and why every priesthood needed a king. In the post-Flood Old Covenant era, only Melchizedek lawfully possessed both offices (Gen. 14:18). Only Christ possesses both offices in New Covenant history. There are no longer prophets, priests, or kings. These Old Covenant offices are today exclusive monopolies of Christ in His capacity as perfect humanity. These three offices have been replaced in the New Covenant era by the Bible (prophetic), eldership (sacramental), and civil magistery (the sword). But the hierarchical concepts of priest and king remain in common language. In the language of seventeenth-century English political theory: "No king—no bishops; no bishops—no king." This turned out to be literally true during the English Civil War (1642–46), a war to remove or retain both the king and his bishops. Archbishop Laud was executed for high treason by the Puritans in 1645. He had previously persecuted Puritans. Then Charles I was executed in 1649—for high treason. When his son Charles II was restored to the throne in 1660, his father's executioners were executed—again, for high treason.

In economic theory, the same transcendent-immanent distinction applies. The owner of an asset exercises legal sovereignty over it. It serves his purposes. But its value in the market is established by the income that it can generate. This, in turn, is established by competitive customer demand. If an owner does not find a use for a capital asset to generate income from outside his own household, then its value is limited to its usefulness within that one household. By using a capital asset to serve customers who are outside the owner's immediate family (the inner ring), the owner increases his stream of income, and therefore increases the value of the asset. So, he exercises *legal sovereignty* over the asset (vertical hierarchy), but in order to maximize its *economic value* in a division-of-labor economy, he must use it to serve

33. Gary North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 1912), Part 2, *Decalogue and Dominion* (1986), Preface.

the desires of paying customers (horizontal hierarchy). *Legal status is vertical. Dominion use is horizontal.* This two-fold aspect of ownership reflects the covenant's transcendent hierarchy, which is a hierarchy of legal status, and it also reflects the covenant's immanent hierarchy, which has to do with dominion and inheritance in history.

F. Covenantal Service: Vertical and Horizontal

Paul in this epistle focuses on the church. He focuses on the church covenant. His concern throughout is hierarchy. He speaks of service and obligation, but because he is speaking about the church covenant, *vertical hierarchy is the conceptual framework for his discussion*. This is because of point four: the enforcement of sanctions, whether ecclesiastical, familial, or civil. A ruler imposes sanctions on the ruled. They are bound together by covenantal oath. Without the oath, the relationship would be horizontal. It would not be a relationship of ruler and ruled.

Vertical service is only one form of service. The other is horizontal. To understand this distinction, consider the institutional church. Membership is by oath. The church offers positive judicial sanctions: baptism and the Lord's Supper. It offers these only to church members. These ecclesiastical rituals are sacraments. They are not lawfully open to people who are not legally bound to God and a church by a covenant oath. Both of these sacraments invoke positive and negative sanctions under God. Excommunication by a church involves the removal of a member's access to the communion table.

The church also offers positive economic sanctions in a limited number of cases.[34] That is, it uses money, goods, and donated time that are provided by members, and then transfers these assets to poor members. Both the collection and the distribution are vertical. The assets are not collected from non-members, and the distribution is made to members. The model here is Acts 6: the establishment of the diaconate.

In other cases, ecclesiastical service is horizontal. Church money and donated assets go to aid non-members. These non-members are not bound by oath to honor the church's vertical hierarchy. They are not under the church's negative sanctions. But because they accept aid from churches, they do come under God's negative sanctions. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for

34. Chapter 5.

it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:19–21).[35] The recipient of church aid becomes a debtor to God, but he does not become a debtor to the church. He is under no obligation to members of the church to perform reciprocal service unless the original grant of aid was made on the basis of his promised performance. Even in this case, there is no means of bringing negative church sanctions on him for subsequent non-performance.

Another reason for offering aid to non-members is to reveal to them the love of God. Some will respond in faith and join the church. Jesus and the early apostles used physical healing as a way to bring people into the kingdom of God by way of the church. "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6). This act of charity led to the conversion of many (Acts. 4:4).

Because the world is wide and filled with great need, such acts of horizontal service by the church are limited in their power to transform society directly. They are *representative acts*. They demonstrate publicly and before God what the church is willing to do for others, with no temporal judicial strings attached, and would be willing to do on a much larger scale if there were more members or more money. The economic sacrifice of members becomes a testimony to Christ's supreme sacrifice for members (special grace) and non-members (common grace).[36] "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). He was the suffering servant.

The civil government, unlike the family and the church, does not legitimately offer positive sanctions. It provides the service of civil justice, which is exclusively restricted to the imposition of negative sanctions against convicted trespassers. These sanctions include the enforcement of restitution from the criminal to the victim. They also include defensive warfare: the service of justice against invaders. But civil government is not like the family and the church with respect to the service of healing. It is the agency of the sword, an exclusively

35. Gary North, *Cooperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 10.

36. North, *Dominion and Common Grace*.

negative biblical sanction. Civil government offers no legitimate positive sanctions, either vertical or horizontal.

In this epistle, Paul does not discuss horizontal service. *The main theme of this epistle is vertical hierarchy*: proper rulership and proper subordination within the confines of the institutional church.

G. Non-Covenantal Service: Vertical and Horizontal

Non-covenantal service occurs outside of the legal boundaries of an institution that has been established by a self-maledictory oath under God. Its sanctions are not covenantal. These sanctions are not imposed vertically by an individual on those who are under his oath-bound legal authority. The sanctions are economic. They are established by contract, not by a self-maledictory oath under God.

Non-covenantal service can take two-forms: charitable and profit-seeking. Charitable service is familiar in every society. It is familiar in every tradition of ethics. The concept of profit-seeking service is an idea that originated in the West, and even more narrowly, Western Europe. Charitable service is non-reciprocal, person to person, or person to external environment. If there is a reward, it comes from God or from the servant's conscience. Profit-seeking service is reciprocal.

1. Vertical Charitable Service

Non-covenantal charitable service can be vertical. Such service involves positive sanctions. When we speak of offering a helping hand, we have a mental image of reaching down and helping someone who has fallen to get back on his feet. This is also the image of the familiar phrase, "getting back on his feet."

Offering voluntary assistance to someone is a means of visibly establishing the recipient's dependence on God. Sometimes this dependence may be permanent, such as in the case of assisting a severely retarded person or someone with Alzheimer's disease. Usually, it is temporary. The assistance establishes *no reciprocal claims*, *donor to recipient*. This is not a loan that must be paid back. But the assistance does establish *reciprocity between God and the recipient*. If the donor is a covenant-keeper, this reciprocity is even stronger. *Grace precedes law, but law does follow grace*. The recipient is now more visibly in debt to God than before. This should lead to repentance before God in the case of covenant-breakers. When it does not lead to repentance, the wrath of God increases. Thus, Paul wrote: "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou

shalt heap coals of fire on his head" (Rom 12:20).[37] This was a citation from Proverbs: "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee" (Prov. 25:21–22).[38]

In the Proverbs passage, we learn of reciprocity between God and the assistance giver. God promises to reward the giver. God also promises to punish the thankless receiver. There is reciprocity upward: the receiver owes God. There is reciprocity downward: God owes the giver. "The Lord shall reward thee." But the relationship between donor and receiver is not reciprocal. It is vertical: the helping hand downward.

The donor is the poor man's means of obtaining God's blessings. The poor man is the means of the donor's obtaining God's blessings. God uses each party as a mediator of His blessings for the other. There are two inter-related hierarchies. The donor is the intermediary in God's transfer of blessings to the recipient. The recipient is the intermediary in God's transfer of blessings to the donor.

2. Horizontal Profit-Seeking Service

Here, there is reciprocity between the participants. This is not a relationship between a donor and a recipient. Each of the parties gives up something, and each receives something. The supreme example of horizontal service is voluntary exchange. Each of the parties is a seller. Each is a buyer. Traditionally, we refer to the seller of money as the buyer, and the receiver of money as the seller. This linguistic convention is useful, but it is analytically incomplete. Analytically, both parties are buyers and sellers. But because money is the most marketable commodity, the buyer (seller of money) possesses greater authority. If there is no buyer, the seller retains ownership of a less marketable asset.

The nature of the exchange is voluntary. Each party expects to be a net beneficiary after the exchange takes place. They may haggle over the price, but if the exchange takes place, then both parties must have expected to benefit. "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth" (Prov. 20:14).[39]

Horizontal service is mutual. This is another way of saying that

37. North, *Cooperation and Dominion*, ch. 10.
38. North, *Wisdom and Dominion*, ch. 76.
39. North, *Wisdom and Dominion*, ch. 59.

it is reciprocal. The obligation is future-oriented: promises to be fulfilled. Unless the agreement called for retroactive obligation after the exchange as part of the selling price, there is no further dependence of either party on the other. The dividing issue between horizontal service and vertical service is dependence. Vertical service establishes the recipient's dependence on God as a result of a charitable act. Horizontal service does not.

3. Vertical Profit-Seeking Service

A man who hires a worker is performing a service: providing him with money. So is the person hired: providing labor. Each expects to benefit from the arrangement. The service is reciprocal.

With vertical service, there is a long-term relationship. The employer expects the employee to come to work on schedule, and the employee expects to be paid on time. There is also long-term mutual dependence. The employer depends on the employees to do their work. The employees expect the employer to sell the output of their labor to customers.

There is a pyramid shape of this allocation of responsibility. The employer can more easily replace an employee than an employee can replace an employer. There are more employees than employers. The services of the employees are more widely distributed. In rare cases, this is not true. A famous entertainer or star athlete may be less replaceable than an owner. But, generally, there is a disparity of both trust and dependence in an employer-employee relationship. The employer's skills are unique; the worker's are not. The level of trust required by an employee is greater than the trust required by an employer. This is equally true of dependence. The employer spreads his risk: lots of replaceable customers and lots of replaceable employees. The employee concentrates his risk: one employer. He can find a new employer, but his search costs are higher than the employer's search costs are to replace a worker.

Economists say that the consumer is sovereign in horizontal profit-seeking service: mutual exchange. This is because he possesses the most marketable commodity: money. Economists should therefore also say that the employer is sovereign in vertical profit-seeking service: mutual exchange. He also possesses the most marketable commodity: money. He is closer to the source of money—customers—than the employee is.

Whenever we hear about the benefits of achieving economic in-

dependence, we are hearing about the goal of escaping from pyramid-shaped dependence: salaried labor. There cannot be economic independence in a cursed world (Gen. 3:17–19).[40] There is rather economic dependence based on a broader distribution of risk: multiple buyers and potential buyers of the output of one's labor.

4. Abraham's Independence

Two incidents in Abraham's life illustrate the patriarch's dedication in remaining independent from the covenant-breakers with whom he had contact: his refusal to receive payment from the king of Sodom after his victory over Chedorlaomer, and his insistence on paying for the cave in which Sarah was buried.

> And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion (Gen. 14:21–24).

> And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there. And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant (Gen. 23:13–16).

In the first incident, Abraham refused a voluntary donation from the king of Sodom. He could have received payment for services rendered, which the king of Sodom voluntarily offered, but he refused. That is, he voluntarily transferred to the king the wealth that the king would have voluntarily transferred to Abraham. He was explicit regarding his reason for refusing payment: he wanted to avoid becoming visibly dependent on this king. To accept a voluntary payment would have meant consenting to the idea that he had been involved in a profit-seeking arrangement based on vertical service: a pyramid of authority, with a covenant-breaking king on top. This would have

40. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, ch. 12.

implied higher and lower, ruler and subordinate. He refused. It was better to do without the spoils of war. This was the price of his visible independence.[41]

In the second incident, Abraham insisted on paying Ephron. Ephron was offering him a voluntarily gift. These two men were rich. Four hundred shekels was a great deal of money. Ephron bragged: "the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead." Abraham was not about to have word go out that he had accepted a donation of this magnitude. This was not conventional hospitality to Abraham; this was an implicit assertion of authority over Abraham. Because of the lack of reciprocity, such service was a form of charity: vertical dependence. It implied higher and lower, ruler and subordinate.

Abraham saw that he represented God in any arrangement with these covenant-breakers. To the extent that he became obligated to them, his God became obligated to their gods. Abraham avoided all signs of such obligation. He paid to maintain his visible independence: by foregoing spoils in the first case, and by foregoing the purchase price of a cave in the second.

H. Paul vs. Adam Smith

In this epistle, the contrast between two approaches to economic analysis becomes clear. Paul analyzes wealth in terms of ecclesiastical hierarchy, which is vertical. Adam Smith analyzes wealth in terms of reciprocal exchange, which is horizontal. Paul discussed the relief of poor in terms of a voluntary, vertical transfer of wealth downward. Adam Smith discussed the relief of the poor in terms of a voluntary, horizontal, reciprocal increase of wealth. Paul discussed the reduction of poverty in terms of what economists call a zero-sum game: the winner (a poor man) profits at the expense of the loser (a rich man). Adam Smith discussed the reduction of poverty in terms of mutual advantage: reciprocal exchange.

For Paul, poverty is a condition imposed on an individual by God's sovereign purposes. For Adam Smith, poverty is the product of insufficient national economic growth—insufficient economic growth per capita. For Paul, the poor man deserves help because his low productivity does not allow him to participate in the market. Adam Smith would have agreed regarding the analysis, but not the solution. Paul

41. *Ibid.*, ch. 21.

preached sacrificial charity by the rich. Smith preached profitable capital investment by the rich. For Paul, a sinking ship needs a bail-out. For Smith, a rising tide raises all ships. There will be more wealth available for helping the poor if most men benefit from an improving standard of living due to increasing corporate productivity.

These are fundamental differences in economic analysis. *The Bible does not so much as hint at the possibility that poverty can be reduced through voluntary exchange*. While Adam Smith occasionally discusses charity, his economic analysis rests almost entirely on the assumption that economic growth is the result of voluntary exchange in the context of a private property legal order. The Bible discusses economic growth in the context of national obedience to God's Biblical law (Deut. 28:1–14).[42] Adam Smith discussed economic growth in the context of an autonomous legal and economic national order: capitalism. The Bible identifies God as the source of economic growth: the Creator and providential Sustainer. Adam Smith identified nature and mankind as the dual sources of economic growth: land, labor, and capital.

Paul's presentation would have been understood by any social theorist, from the ancient world through the fifteenth century. A debate over economic cause and effect would have arisen only with respect to which God or gods are the source of economic sanctions. Smith's presentation is modern. The debate over economic cause and effect arises only with respect to which legal order provides the greatest economic growth: free enterprise, socialism, or the mixed economy. Smith used the analogy of the invisible hand of the free market to explain the existence of economic order apart from a central plan enforced by the state. A pagan in Paul's day would not have understood this reference as an analogy. "The Hand will get you if you don't obey," would have been his assessment. For Smith, the invisible hand was an analogy, just as natural selection along the lines of a breeder was an analogy for Charles Darwin. The pre-modern world viewed causation much more personally.

Paul did not put the question of wealth and poverty at the center of his exposition. Smith did, and ever since, there have been few rival issues of equal or greater authority than the question of wealth and poverty. The debate between truth and falsehood, beauty and ugliness, wisdom and foolishness do not occupy modern man's attention compared to the debate over wealth and poverty. Only the discussion of life and death is on the same plane, and this discussion

42. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 69.

eventually returns to wealth and poverty. There is far more public debate over who will pay for people's medical care than there is over the nature of time and eternity, a discussion which is confined mainly to Bible-believing churches. Liberal churches prefer to discuss wealth and poverty.

I. Service and Dominion

This epistle deals with hierarchy. It therefore deals with godly rule and godly submission. Because those in submission always outnumber those who rule, and because every vertical hierarchy is necessarily representative and therefore pyramid-shaped, Paul's message regarding submission applies to more people than does his message regarding leadership.

The Bible teaches that *submission is a path to authority*. Those who are under institutional authority are told to obey, even when their rulers are not motivated by service to those under them. The Bible also teaches that *exercising authority is a form of service*. People in positions of authority are told to make decisions in terms of what will benefit those under their authority. This means that *service in a godly vertical hierarchy is a two-way street*. Service extends upward and downward. Both the rulers and the ruled have trouble accepting this two-fold concept of vertical hierarchy, which is based on the ideal of service. This ideal interferes with their presumed autonomy.

Rulers find it difficult to understand that there are divinely created, built-in positive institutional sanctions for service to those under their authority. Subordinates find it difficult to believe that there are divinely created, built-in positive institutional sanctions for patient obedience to cruel or incompetent rulers. Neither rulers nor ruled find it obvious that their respective agendas are advanced by means of service to others.

Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776) revolutionized economic theory by placing service to customers at the center of economic analysis. It is central in two senses: conceptually irreplaceable and institutionally horizontal. Smith argued that a man's self-interest is best advanced by his service to the interests of others. Smith's theory applies to non-covenantal horizontal relationships. This distinguishes it from Paul's first epistle to Timothy, which has to do with a vertical covenantal hierarchy.

The full title of Smith's book is *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. The book was a refutation of earlier views of

national wealth that relied on hierarchical state coercion to restrict imports and increase exports in order to build up a national hoard of gold. Smith did not argue that increased wealth is a bad thing. On the contrary, he favored it. He argued that open competition in a private property order is best able to achieve both increased national wealth and increased per capita wealth.

Similarly, the extension of the kingdom of God in history is Paul's goal, not just in this epistle, but throughout his entire career as an apostle. The difference is, Paul did not place economic growth at the center of his discussion of kingdom growth. Neither did Christ. Economic growth is not a prominent feature of New Testament social ethics. In fact, there is comparatively little space in the New Testament devoted to discussions of social ethics. *This is because social ethics is covered in the Old Testament*. There, economic growth is prominently featured, usually in the context of dominion. The biblical imagery of dominion is vertical: ruler and ruled. The economics of dominion is horizontal: inheritance.

> And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that **the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth**: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store (Deut. 28:1–5).

> And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. **And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath**; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them (Deut. 28:11–13).[43]

> What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease; and **his seed shall inherit the earth** (Ps. 25:12–13).

43. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 70.

> For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. **But the meek shall inherit the earth**; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace (Ps. 37:9–11).

J. A Kingdom of Law

There are social theorists, economists, and theologians who insist that the New Testament is a radical reconstruction of the Old Testament, i.e., that much of what God taught in the Old Testament is denied in the New Testament. This thesis of rival worldviews, Old Testament vs. New Testament, is prominent among theological liberals and theological pietists. In the modern world, liberals and pietists constitute the overwhelming majority of Protestants.

I am neither a theological liberal nor a theological pietist. I am a covenant theologian. I discuss economic theory from the standpoint of the biblical covenant. In my theory of covenant law, I regard the following Mosaic laws as annulled: land laws and seed laws, which were related to Jacob's Christ-fulfilled prophecy to Judah regarding Shiloh (Gen. 49:10), a kingly prophecy; and priestly laws, which were also fulfilled by Christ.[44] With respect to the Mosaic law's cross-boundary civil laws,[45] of which the Ten Commandments are best representative, both covenants proclaim their binding authority. If these laws are still binding, then so are their sanctions: *no sanctions—no law*. The consistent civil enforcement of these covenant sanctions, over time, furthers the extension of the kingdom of God in history.

With respect to the *non-civil* Mosaic cross-boundary laws—sometimes referred to as *moral laws*—they are still in force in the New Testament, and so are God's predictable corporate sanctions, negative and positive. The moral laws are laws. Laws have sanctions attached to them. *Laws without sanctions are mere suggestions*. Negative sanctions retard the work of those who break the law. Positive sanctions extend the work of those who obey the law. Dominion in history is therefore by covenant law and its associated sanctions. The question is: "Whose law and whose sanctions?"

This line of reasoning is rejected by theological liberals and theological pietists. This is because both groups reject covenant theology. What is perplexing is that so many covenant theologians also reject

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44. North, *Boundaries and Dominion*, Conclusion:C:2.
45. *Ibid*., Conclusion:C:3.

the suggestion that covenant sanctions in history are structured to favor the extension of God's kingdom rather than Satan's. They argue that Old Covenant sanctions (1) are no longer in effect in the New Covenant; or (2) are random in the New Covenant; or (3) are antichurch in the New Testament. They agree entirely with theological liberals and pietists on this issue: *the ideal of Christendom is illegitimate*.

This is why theological liberals, pietists, and most covenant theologians reject any suggestion that there is a uniquely biblical approach to economic theory that rests on the presupposition of the universal presence of corporate covenantal sanctions that are built into every society by God. They share with humanistic economists a hostility to any suggestion of the existence of covenant sanctions in New Testament history. My suggestion is not taken seriously, namely, that economic profit and loss are in some fundamental way reflections of heaven and hell.

Conclusion

When we come to this epistle, we should not expect to find an exposition of economic theory, not because Paul was uninterested in economic theory or had nothing to say about it, but because he was dealing in this epistle with the vertical hierarchy of the institutional church. His narrowly confined discussion did not lend itself to the nature and causes of the wealth of nations. He discussed vertical covenantal service, not horizontal non-covenantal service.

The expositor must remain alert to the possibility that a Pauline application of the principle of ecclesiastical hierarchy may in some way be hostile to one or another theory of humanistic economics. My self-appointed task is to detect any such discrepancy and explain it in terms of the biblical covenant. An additional task would then be to reformulate economic theory in terms of Paul's principle. Neither the economists nor the theologians have bothered to do this. They are not interested in doing this.

There are numerous critics of my approach to economic theory. Mostly, there is silence. Secular economists have paid no attention to Christian economics. Christian economists have paid no attention to my biblical exegesis.[46] Theologians, especially covenant theologians,

46. An example is provided Donald Hay of Jesus College, Oxford, who footnoted my book, *An Introduction to Christian Economics* (Craig Press, 1973), to justify this assertion: "The fundamentalist churches of North America have, for example, espoused the secular market doctrines of libertarian thought. . . ." Hay, *Economics Today: A Christian*

have also not adopted my efforts and especially my findings. In fact, they have ignored my findings.

To my Christian critics, I say, as always: *you can't beat something with nothing*. Gentlemen, where are your economic commentaries? Where are your Adam Smith-sized expositions of biblical economics? What hermeneutic are you suggesting as an alternative to a multitude of secular theories of economics? What system of economic cause and effect governs the New Testament era? What system governed the Old Covenant era? Was it confined to Mosaic Israel, or was it universal?

These are not minor questions. Just because covenant theologians have chosen not to answer them, or even acknowledge their existence, does not mean that these questions are not important for covenant theology. It means only that covenant theologians have long preferred not to deal with these questions. These questions make them uncomfortable. These questions suggest the possibility of uniquely Bible-based answers, which in turn suggests theonomy. Theonomy suggests theocracy. Theocracy suggests Christian responsibility outside the four walls of the institutional church and outside the family. *Responsibility is what covenant theologians are attempting to evade*. They have more than they think they can handle in just trying to explain what has gone wrong in the institutional church, let alone what needs to be done to reform it. The reform of society at large is not even an issue for them at this point in time. But this point in time is the third millennium A.D.

Modern theologians reject the idea that the Bible provides authoritative laws that favor a free market economy, beginning with "thou shalt not steal." Even those theologians who favor the free market economy reject arguments that suggest a necessary connection between biblical law and the free market. They reject biblical law even when they accept the free market. They think Adam Smith is still relevant. They think biblical law is no longer relevant.

I think Adam Smith and biblical law are both relevant. It is in an economic commentary on this Pauline epistle that a discussion of Adam Smith and theonomy can no longer be legitimately deferred.

Critique (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1989), p. 173. Hay's book was published seven years after my commentary on Genesis (1982), four years after my commentary on Exodus 1–19 (1985), and three years after my commentary on Exodus 20 (1986). It was published two years after *Inherit the Earth: Biblical Blueprints for Economics* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987). Hay made no reference to any of these books. Hay, with no detailed exegesis, defended a state-regulated economy in the name of biblical justice. He suggested no Bible-based limitations on the state's intervention into the economy. The book offers no Scripture index. It would have been a very short index.

1

THEONOMY AS ORTHODOXY

Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

I TIMOTHY 1:5–11

A. Paul's Commandment

The theocentric focus of these laws is the reduction of men's insubordination against God (v. 9). This goal is an aspect of hierarchy: point two of the biblical covenant.[1] Lawless men are in rebellion against God and the gospel of God's redemption through faith in Christ. Paul's affirmation of God's law in this passage is specifically associated with the gospel (v. 11). This is a very important passage that relates the law and the gospel. I would go so far as to say that *without a clear theological understanding of this passage, it is not possible to accurately relate the law and the gospel.*

1. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 2. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, [1980] 2010), ch. 2.

Paul speaks of a commandment. He does not say explicitly what this commandment is. He says what its goal is: love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith (v. 5). The King James translates the Greek word for "love" (*agápé*) as "charity." Modern translations substitute "love." Charity has a narrow connotation in modern English, i.e., giving things away to those who need help. The differing meanings today of "charity" and "love" are seen clearly in I Corinthians 13. When we follow the King James and think "charity," something important is lost. Paul is talking about a much broader emotion than the willingness to give things away.

What was this commandment? Was it the commandment that God gave to Paul to become an apostle (v. 1)? Or was it Paul's commandment to Timothy to remain in Ephesus and challenge the false teachers (v. 3)? I think it was the latter, for verse 5 appears in the context of the false teachers who have strayed from the commandment (v. 6). The goal of the commandment is being thwarted by false teaching (vv. 6–7).

Paul then moves from a discussion of the commandment to a discussion of God's law. Timothy must enforce theological orthodoxy. This is Paul's command to Timothy. Paul here links biblical law to theological orthodoxy. *This epistle is Paul's premier exposition on the ecclesiastical enforcement of theological orthodoxy*. Paul teaches in this epistle that theological orthodoxy mandates theonomy: biblical law. According to this epistle, biblical law is not a temporary intrusion into the historical development of the kingdom of God. On the contrary, it is at the heart of this development, not as a means of redemption, but as a tool of dominion.[2]

B. Paul's Defense of Theonomy

Verses 5–11 constitute an important New Testament passage on the subject of the correct use of biblical civil law. *I regard this as the most important New Testament passage dealing with the lawful use of the Mosaic civil law.*[3] Yet the passage is not well known. Indicative of the lack of interest by modern theologians regarding this passage is the fact that Oxford University's N. T. Wright, widely regarded as an academic expert in New Testament ethics, did not comment on this passage,

2. Gary North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), Part 3, *Tools of Dominion* (1990).

3. If I were to choose my turf in the New Testament defense of theonomy, I would choose I Timothy. Matthew 5:17–19 was Greg Bahnsen's battlefield of preference. I have always preferred an ammo belt filled with judicial specifics to a single hermeneutical hand grenade. I can shoot better than I can throw.

or even refer to it, in his book, *The Climax of The Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (1992), a monograph on Paul's use of the Mosaic law.

1. False Teachers

Paul speaks of law in the singular. He criticizes certain men who have raised themselves up in the church at Ephesus as teachers of the law. He does not criticize them for teaching the Mosaic law. He criticizes them for being false teachers who do not understand the law (v. 7). Then he begins a brief disquisition on God's law. He affirms God's law as a good thing when it is used lawfully (v. 8). Every example of the law that Paul lists here was a Mosaic civil law for which specific civil sanctions were mandated in the Old Testament.

What is the *lawful use* of God's civil law? Paul gives a clear answer: *to place limits on evil-doers*. "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers" (v. 9). Certain people are lawless and insubordinate to God. He identifies what kinds of people he has in mind. He does so by listing a series of crimes. By "crimes," I mean sins that are lawfully punished by the imposition of civil sanctions on convicted perpetrators. Paul lists these crimes under the general category of unholiness and profanity (v. 9). An unholy person has violated a moral boundary. A profane person has violated sacred space or sacred property.[4] This would include murder: destroying the image of God in men (Gen. 9:6). Certain crimes represent unholy behavior. Each of the infractions in Paul's list is also found in the Mosaic law: murder (Ex. 20:13; 21:14), manslaying (Ex. 21:22–25), fornication,[5] male homosexuality (Lev. 20:13), kidnapping (Ex. 21:16), lying (Ex. 23:1)[6] and perjury (Ex. 20:16; Deut. 19:15–21).

4. On profanity, see Gary North, *Boundaries and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Leviticus*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1994] 2012), ch. 6.

5. Under the Mosaic statutes, fornication for money by a priest's daughter was a capital crime (Lev. 21:9). This was a priestly law. It is no longer in force because the priesthood has been changed (Heb. 7). Fornication with an unbetrothed virgin was a crime against her father, and the state was required to enforce the fornicator's payment of 50 shekels of silver to the woman's father (Deut. 22:29). If a woman was betrothed as a concubine—a wife with no dowry—both she and the fornicator were to be scourged (whipped) (Lev. 19:20). Adultery—copulation with another person's spouse—was adultery, and this was a capital crime. The victimized spouse had the right to command the state to execute both of them, though not just one of them. See North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 32.

6. Lying is not a crime unless it accompanies fraud or slander, where an identifiable

2. Civil Sanctions

Without sanctions, there is no law. Without civil sanctions, there is no civil law. *Paul is here defending the Mosaic civil law and its mandated civil sanctions*. He is not speaking of Mosaic ceremonial laws that were enforced by the priests. He is also not speaking of violations of moral laws to which no civil sanctions are specified. In another epistle, Paul offered a similar list, although it was not made up of exclusively civil laws: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 6:9–10).[7] Any suggestion that Paul was an antinomian because he wrote that Christians are under grace rather than law (Rom. 6:14–15) ignores the passages in which he identified the eternally lost in terms of their behavior. Any discussion of Paul's doctrine of grace that does not include a detailed consideration of these passages is incomplete and one-sided, i.e., antinomian.

3. New Covenant Laws

In Galatians, he spoke of the Mosaic law as a tool for instructing the children of the household. The distinction is between spiritual children (Old Covenant saints) and spiritual adults (New Covenant saints). Children are treated as servants in their father's household (Gal. 4:1–7). This was Israel's condition under the Mosaic law. Christians are no longer under the Mosaic law, *taken as a covenantal unit*, just as adult heirs are no longer under the authority of household servants (v. 7). This does not mean that all of what the servants had taught the heirs is irrelevant to the heirs. On the contrary, their father had placed them under the servants' authority in order that they might learn to govern themselves internally by the external standards of the law. Paul in Galatians referred to the priestly ("ceremonial") aspects of the Mosaic law, which he called weak and beggarly elements of the law (v. 9). His examples were Mosaic requirements for honoring special ceremonial days and months (v. 10). These laws had been designed by God for righteous people under the Old Covenant.

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injury to a third party takes place. Fraud in general is prohibited by the law prohibiting false weights and measures (Lev. 19:35–36). North, *Boundaries and Dominion*, ch. 19.

7. Gary North, *Judgment and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), ch. 7.

In fact, a person identified himself as a member of God's righteous nation by obeying these laws. But these laws were laws for children, i.e., God's covenant people at an earlier stage in the development of God's covenants. The question is this: Which laws are for the New Covenant era? Surely the list in I Timothy 1:9–10 constitutes one such list.

In this epistle to Timothy, he is not speaking of the weak and beggarly elements of the Mosaic law. He is speaking of civil laws that restrain evil-doers who are insubordinate to God, and who reveal this by their actions. The enforcement of these laws is lawful, he says. These statutes of the Mosaic law are not restricted in their authority to a society made up of spiritual children. They are not weak and beggarly elements of the annulled Old Covenant. They retain full authority in God's civil covenant. The New Covenant has not annulled any of these laws. Paul lists these unholy acts as examples of things contrary to sound doctrine (v. 10)—literally, "healthful teaching." These crimes are contrary to the gospel (v. 11).

I regard this passage as the clearest example in the New Testament of Paul's commitment to theonomy as a principle of biblical interpretation. Here, he affirms the Mosaic civil law in general by identifying specific Mosaic civil statutes as defining unrighteousness. He says that God's law is designed to restrict specific behavior. Theonomy in this sense is not designed for righteous people, but for the unrighteous. He who commits such acts is not a righteous person. This was also Paul's point in I Corinthians 6:9–10.

C. "We're Under Grace, Not Law!"

The phrase, "under grace, not law," does not mean—cannot possibly mean—that all of the Mosaic civil laws and sanctions have been permanently annulled by the New Covenant. Paul in this passage affirms the continuing validity of several Mosaic civil laws. Paul says that *these laws have* ***no power*** *over covenant-keepers,* because covenant-keepers have been delivered from these sins. The *power of these temptations* over them has been *removed by God's special grace*. The gospel has delivered them from bondage to the law by redeeming their humanity. They are not under these laws, *not* in the sense of not being under a civil government that lawfully enforces these laws, but in the sense of their being new men in Christ.

1. The Power of Sin

What did Paul mean when he wrote in Romans that Christians are under grace, not law? He was referring to the *indwelling power of sin*.

> For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:14–18).

Paul in Romans was writing about *personal ethics*, not civil government. The passage has nothing to say about civil government. It speaks of *the hierarchy of sin*. Covenant-breakers are in bondage to sin. When Paul wrote that we are "under grace, not law," he was referring to its eternal sanctions. Christians are not under these sanctions because Christ has suffered and died in their place (Rom. 5).

On the other hand, Christians *are* under the civil law because they are under civil sanctions, just as everyone is supposed to be. The judicial question is this: "Whose civil law and which civil sanctions?" In a Christian commonwealth, God's Biblical civil laws are supposed to apply to every resident. This is the biblical principle of the rule of law in action. "One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you" (Ex. 12:49).[8]

A Christian is under God's Biblical laws as a resident of the kingdom of God *in history*. God's law is supposed to be enforced by family government, church government, and civil government. Above all, it is to be enforced by self-government. But a Christian is not under God's law and its sanctions as a member of the kingdom of God *in eternity*. His dual citizenship (Phil. 3:20)[9] is reflected in two different ways with respect to God's law. *A Christian is under God's law in history, for he is under the threat of its negative sanctions*. He is not under this threat in eternity, for Christ has suffered its negative sanctions on his behalf. This fact does not deny the eternality of God's law. For covenant-keepers, the power of sin is gone. For covenant-breakers, the power to sin is gone. The law's sanctions, like the law itself, are eternal: exclusively positive for covenant-keepers; exclusively negative for covenant-breakers.

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8. North, *Authority and Dominion*, Part 2, *Representation and Dominion* (1985), ch. 14.

9. "For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil 3:20).

2. Law and Sanctions

Here is a fundamental principle of law: *Where there are no sanctions, there is no law*. In eternity, the negative sanctions of God's biblical law will not apply to covenant-keepers, for they have been applied to Christ on their behalf already. The sanctions *will* be applied to covenant-breakers, who were not beneficiaries of God's saving grace in history. In history, however, both the threat and the promise of the imposition of the positive and negative covenantal sanctions of God's biblical law apply to everyone, which is why there is a valid trio of covenantal hierarchies: church, family, and state. Each covenantal agency is required by God to enforce God's Biblical sanctions on all those under its jurisdiction.

Consider this example. Christians are not authorized to commit bestiality, despite the fact that there is no New Testament recapitulation of the Mosaic laws against this practice.[10] Neither is the absence of any restatement of these laws valid evidence that God now allows the practice, or that the state should not enforce the Mosaic laws against bestiality. Yet there are very few Christians today who have a raging temptation to get involved in this sin. They are lawfully under civil laws against bestiality because these civil laws are not annulled in the New Covenant, but this temptation does not affect them personally. Its power over them is nil. In this sense, they are not under these laws, because they are not tempted by them, and even if they were, God restrains their temptation. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13).

I use this theonomic example because, in the year of our Lord, 2004, mass e-mailings on the Internet promoted Web sites featuring bestiality. I received regular solicitations ("spam") in my e-mail box for such commercial Web sites. But I was not tempted to visit these sites, let alone practice the evil. Not many people are tempted. This ancient evil is not familiar to most Westerners. They have not developed a taste for it. Nevertheless, this ancient evil, long underground and on the fringes of Western society, is now reappearing, and its

10. "And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast" (Lev. 20:15). "And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman, and the beast: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. 20:16).

imagery is nearly beyond the arm of the law because of the nature of the Internet: beyond local civil jurisdictions. Christian civilization had kept this practice limited for almost seventeen centuries. Now, however, Christian civilization in the West is in a downward phase. Old evils are re-surfacing.

To argue that the phrase, "we're under grace, not law," means that the practice of bestiality is now lawful, either for covenant-keepers or covenant-breakers, is to deny Paul's explicit teaching about the law in I Timothy 1:5–11. The next time you hear someone cite Romans 6:14–15 in defense of *civil antinomianism*, ask him: "Are you referring to the legalization of bestiality?" See what he says.[11] It is even more relevant in today's world of digital communications. Those Christians who cite "we're under grace, not law," have given almost no thought to the implications of their position for both civil government and public debauchery.

Then they follow with Matthew 7:1: "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Ask them: "Do you mean that Christians should not get involved in politics and must never serve on a jury? Does you mean that no Christian can lawfully be a police officer?" They have no idea. They just rattle off these phrases. They never think about what they are saying. They react automatically to the suggestion that God judges people in history by means of hierarchical governments and sanctions. They do not understand that it is never a question of "sanctions vs. no sanctions." It is always a question of *which sanctions*, imposed by *what agency of government*. Matthew 7:1 is in fact Christ's solemn warning to society to covenant in terms of biblical law, for there is no way to gain justice for yourself without granting it to everyone else. "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matt. 7:2). If you want to be judged by God's law rather than by covenant-breaking man's law, then you must judge by God's law. This is the biblical principle of the rule of law.

Finally, they end with a confident citation. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (John 8:7). They never bother to mention the following facts: (1) this was a set-up by the Pharisees to embarrass Christ (v. 6); (2) Christ was not a civil judge; (3) the Pharisees never bothered to bring in the co-adulterer, who was male. This was their attempt to get Christ to issue a public condem-

11. I first recommended this apologetic tactic in *75 Bible Questions Your Instructors Pray You Won't Ask* (Tyler, Texas: Spurgeon Press, 1986): Question 26.

nation in what was clearly a rigged accusation, in which the Pharisees were shielding the man who presumably had initiated the adulterous act. Jesus knew that they were being unjust to the woman by not also bringing the man who had seduced her. They were not applying the law to both parties equally, a violation of the biblical principle of equality before the law (Ex. 12:49).[12] They all went out of His presence. But naive antinomian Christians, who know nothing of Mosaic law and its standards of justice, blithely cite this passage. A literal interpretation would mean that no civil government is legal, for all judges are sinners. But those who cite this passage as if it meant anything other than Christ's response to a set-up using rigged evidence honestly think they are saying something profound when they cite this passage in response to the suggestion that God's Bible-revealed cross-boundary civil laws[13] are still binding in the New Testament era.

Christians announce, "we're under grace, not law." In fact, they are under pagan courts and pagan lawyers. They know this. They much prefer pagan law and pagan courts to God's law. They have self-consciously denied the relevance of Christ's warning: "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matt. 7:2). They vote for politicians who mete out pagan judicial measures. They thereby bring themselves under pagan civil law and pagan civil sanctions, all in the name of religiously neutral natural law and religiously neutral social ethics. They prefer this arrangement to the enforcement of God's civil laws and the ideal of Christendom, which they regard as both tyrannical and immoral. They announce: "Christians can live under any civil order," but they do not really believe this. They do not believe that Christians can or should live under an explicitly Christian civil order. They deny the possibility of such a civil order, and they dismiss as immoral or at least ill-conceived any attempt to establish such an order. On this point, they are allied with humanists.

Sin places covenant-keepers under God's law. As an example, when a man commits adultery with a "strange woman," he risks contracting a venereal disease. He remains under nature's law and its sanctions. To argue that he is not under nature's law, because he has made a profession of faith, is ridiculous. Few Christians would argue for such a position.

12. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 14.

13. On cross-boundary laws, see Gary North, *Boundaries and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Leviticus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1994] 2012), Conclusion:C.

I argue that it is equally foolish to insist that adultery is no longer governed by biblical civil law. When a modern society refuses to impose the Mosaic civil law governing adultery, including—at the discretion of the victimized spouse—its mandated capital sanction, God's direct negative corporate sanctions will eventually be imposed on that society (Deut. 8:19–20).[14] To argue that "we're under grace, not law" in defense of a social order that adopts some law-order other than the Bible's is merely to call for the substitution of other civil laws and other civil sanctions for God's civil laws and civil sanctions. This rebellion brings that society under the threat of God's directly imposed sanctions.

3. False Teachers

Throughout my commentaries, I have long referred to God's biblical law, not just "God's law." I have done my best to distinguish my exposition of theonomy from what is called natural law theory. Theonomy is explicitly opposed to the natural law tradition, which had its origin in pagan Stoic thought,[15] and was imported into the church mainly by medieval scholastic theologians.

Paul is not speaking in this passage about a system of natural law or common law. He is speaking of God's biblical law, lawfully used. He contrasts God's law, lawfully used, with the false teaching of men who do not understand the law of God. These men were involved in teaching fables and long genealogies (v. 4). Who were these men? They were spiritual disciples of the Pharisees. They were trying to persuade gentiles that the latter should obey Mosaic laws that mandated religious ceremonies (Gal. 2). We know that the targets of Paul's displeasure here were Judaizers.[16] Gentile priests and philosophers were not engaged in detailed genealogical studies. Genealogy was a concern of the Pharisees. Paul was at war with Judaizers, who were inside the church. They sought to bring gentiles under the Mosaic ceremonial law, meaning laws associated with the priestly status of Old Covenant national Israel. The Judaizers were not promoting some gentile view of law.

Paul here contrasts God's law, lawfully used, with fables and genealogies. He is *not* contrasting the Mosaic civil law with the Mosaic

14. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 23.

15. Sheldon S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1960), pp. 77–82.

16. William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1957), pp. 58–59.

ceremonial law, as he did in Galatians. He does not dismiss the Mosaic ceremonial laws as fables that produce disputes. He does not even mention Mosaic ceremonial laws in this epistle. He is contrasting God's law with forms of error that produce disputes (v. 4). He calls this idle talk, or as the King James puts it graphically, vain jangling (v. 6). What had been mandated by the Mosaic law—ceremonial laws—had by Paul's day become perverted by false teachers. Christ had repeatedly challenged false teachers from the same theological camp. Paul here continues this challenge.

What is Paul talking about? He has in mind Phariseeism, of which he had been a part (Phil. 3:5). The Pharisees had built up an enormous unwritten code of legal restrictions. This oral tradition was regarded by the Pharisees as possessing authority equal to the Mosaic law.[17] They insisted that the oral tradition went back to Moses.[18] Beginning in the second century, A.D., a few rabbis began to write down these oral laws. By A.D. 500, there were two enormous compilations of these legal texts (mishnah) and rabbinic commentaries (gemara): the Babylonian Talmud and the Jerusalem Talmud, which was incomplete. The former compilation became dominant in Judaism.[19] It defined Judaism until the nineteenth century, when mainstream Judaism began to go theologically liberal.

D. Making Society Safer

This passage promotes love out of a pure heart (v. 5). Paul's list of laws under the general category of "the law" is taken from the Mosaic civil law. But how can civil law create love? It cannot do this. The purpose of civil law is not the creation of good people. Rather, civil law seeks to restrict certain evil acts of insubordinate people, i.e., criminals. God's civil law is not made for righteous people, Paul says (v. 9). *This is a warning for God's people to behave righteously*.

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17. The Sadducees rejected the oral tradition. Louis Finkelstein, *The Pharisees: The Sociological Background of Their Faith*, 2 vols., 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1962), I, ch. XIII. After Rome's destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, they disappeared. *The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion*, ed. R. J. Zvi and Geoffrey Wigoder (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1965), p. 340. The Pharisees replaced them as the leaders of Judaism, which is the religion taught by the rabbis.

18. Jacob Neusner, *The Pharisees: Rabbinic Perspectives* (Hoboken, New Jersey: KTAV, 1973), p. 196.

19. In medieval times, a small Jewish sect known as the Karaites rejected the Talmud. Their origin is generally traced to Anan ben David in the eighth century. About 30,000 of them resided in the State of Israel in 1999. Nechemia Meyers, "Israel's 30,000 Karaites follow Bible, not Talmud," *Jewish Bulletin of Northern California News* (Dec. 10, 1999).

1. Redemption

In what way is civil law related to redemption? If the goal of the commandment is the creation of internal righteousness—love from a cleansed heart—then civil law is impotent. Civil law cannot change human nature. No law can. This was Paul's permanent message: salvation is by grace through faith, not by law.

Paul specifically mentions the gospel at the end of this passage (v. 11). The gospel is the good news to fallen man of the substitionary atonement by Jesus Christ, and God's judicial imputation of Christ's perfect righteousness to sinners.

> For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement (Rom. 5:6–11).

The gospel is the good news of men's deliverance from the bondage of sin by God's unmerited grace through faith in Christ. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8–9). This grace is designed to produce good works: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

2. Gospel and Law

Then what is the relationship between the gospel and the Mosaic civil law? Paul says that these civil laws are not made for righteous people. This means that righteous people are not to come under the negative civil sanctions mandated by God through Moses for violations of these laws, for righteous people do not commit such acts. *God's saving grace removes specific sinners from the ethical category of the unrighteous*. It transforms them, so that they do not commit such acts. The Mosaic civil law is not made for them, for they have been transformed. They still commit sins (I John 1:10), but not these crimes. *If they continue to commit such crimes, this is evidence that testifies against their judicial status as covenant-keepers*.

If they previously had committed these crimes, and were lawfully

convicted for having committed them, they are still lawfully classified by society as criminals. They are still under the civil sanctions. But this does not change the fact that these laws were not made for them. The laws were made for what they had been: criminals.

If they committed any these crimes, but they have not been convicted, they still owe restitution to God and to any victims. Furthermore, if someone perjured himself, and, as a result, some innocent person was convicted or at least placed at risk of conviction, the gospel does not relieve the former criminal from confessing his crime and making restitution to the victim. But these laws were not made for the redeemed person he has become.

Paul's exposition of the law prepares Timothy for Paul's confession that he had been the chief of sinners (vv. 12–16). Jesus subsequently showed grace to Paul. This made Paul an example of God's grace (v. 16). Others may profit from this example. Paul uses this as an example of deliverance. What he had been, he no longer is. What he had done, he no longer does. What had condemned him, no longer condemns him. The Mosaic law that had been made for him is no longer made for him. He has participated in *the transition from wrath to grace*, which is the story of the Bible from Genesis 3 to Revelation 20.

The Mosaic civil law was not designed to transform men's nature. It was made to reduce evil. It infringed on the actions of evil-doers retroactively, imposing negative sanctions on them, or forcing them to make restitution to their victims. The law's presence in society was designed to put the fear of God into them and others like them. "And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously" (Deut. 17:13). The law in this sense was made for the Israelites. Paul does not so much as hint that the result of the Mosaic civil law—fear of committing crimes—is undesirable today. On the contrary, he says that the law is good (v. 8).

Critics of certain civil laws—very often laws associated with violations of sexual boundaries—insist that civil laws cannot make men good. "You can't change human nature!" (It is worth noting that those people who argue this way also tend to be favorable to civil laws that interfere with an owner's use of his property.)[20] Theirs is a spurious argument. Civil law is not intended to change human nature, which it cannot do. Civil law is intended to make people *safer* by restricting specified public evils. By increasing the criminal's risk

20. This is not true of libertarians, who oppose civil laws against sexual acts and the free exercise of property.

of coming under negative civil sanctions, civil law reduces the supply of crime by raising its cost. This is a law of economics: *when the production cost of something rises, less of it is supplied*. Civil law is designed to increase peace and safety by reducing the level of rebellion against God, which manifests itself as rebellion against righteous people and law-abiding sinners. The goal of civil law is increased peace and tranquility for society, a goal that Paul refers to in the next section (I Tim. 2:1–2).[21] *The civil law's goal is not the transformation of human nature*. Civil law does not make righteous men out of unrighteous men. It makes unrighteous men *behave* more like righteous men. There is a difference: the difference between the doctrine of *salvation by law* and the doctrine of *salvation by grace*.

Paul's language allows for the possibility that he was using a rhetorical technique with his statement that the law is not made for the righteous person. Was he trying to persuade his readers that all men are unrighteous? Jesus had used a similar technique when He told the Jewish leaders that sick people, not healthy people, are in need of a physician (Luke 5:31). He was subtly warning them that they were morally sick. He said that He had come to call sinners to repentance, not the righteous (v. 32). Was Paul also using the terms "righteous" and "sinners" in this way? Was he implying that all men are sinners, so therefore they all need the restraints of these specific civil laws? Was he being rhetorical when he wrote that the law was not made for the righteous?

I do not believe that this was Paul's line of reasoning in this passage. He was writing to Timothy. He was not confronting the Judaizers directly, unlike Jesus, who had publicly confronted the Jewish leaders. When Paul writes that these laws are made for the unrighteous, he means *criminals*, not sinners in general. He has in mind the Mosaic law in its capacity as a source of social peace.

E. Kidnapping, War, and Slavery

In verse 10, Paul identifies kidnappers as evil-doers. The Greek word is translated as "menstealers." This Greek word appears only in this verse. It is a combination of two Greek words meaning "men" and "feet." The literal meaning is a man who places others at his feet. *Strong's Concordance* translates it as "enslaver." This verse is the key New Testament passage relating to the immorality of one aspect of

21. Chapter 2.

slavery—specifically, the forcible kidnapping of slaves by private individuals. Later in this epistle, Paul raises the issue of slavery.[22] Paul's discussions of slavery must be understood in light of this verse.

The practice of stealing men to make them into forced servants of others is evil. It is a form of kidnapping. This was a civil crime in the Mosaic law. "And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death" (Ex. 21:16).[23] Kidnapping remains a civil crime, according to Paul in this passage.

1. Harvesting Slaves

The Mosaic Covenant did not allow Israel's conquest of foreign nations to become a means of stealing men for the purpose of harvesting slaves. When Israel made war with a city outside of Canaan (Deut. 20:15), and the city surrendered, its inhabitants became tributaries, i.e., taxpayers (Deut. 20:11).[24] If the besieged city refused to surrender, all of the males, young and old, had to be executed when it fell (v. 13). Only the females were to be spared (v. 14). This mandated that the females be brought back to Israel, in order to keep them from either starving or falling prey to another city's warriors. Women could be made to serve as slaves as part of a military conquest. This was a form of mercy. They were not to be executed or left behind as defenseless widows or orphans. But the males were not to be enslaved and brought back to Israel, filling the land with covenant-breakers seeking revenge.

Paul's epistle was not written to the Jews. It did not assume that the gentiles had such a civil law as this one governing Israel's military conquests. In fact, it assumed the opposite. Israel was allowed to import slaves from foreign nations (Lev. 25:44–46).[25] These slaves had not been conquered by Israel. They would not regard Israel as the original cause of their enslavement. They had been the victims of another army.

Paul's condemnation here applies to the deliberate harvesting of slaves as a profession. By the first century A.D., the slave trade was centuries old and widespread in both Greece and Rome. Rome had long used its military conquests to harvest slaves, who were then sold to the slave traders who followed Rome's armies.[26] Paul does not here

22. Chapter 8, below.
23. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 34.
24. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 48.
25. North, *Boundaries and Dominion*, ch. 31.
26. Milton Meltzer, *Slavery: A World History*, 2 vols. (n.p.: Da Capo, 1993), I, p. 110.

condemn this means of financing wars, even though the Mosaic law outlawed the practice for Israel. He condemns profit-seeking thieves who use coercion to steal individuals, as distinguished from armies that conquer cities, but spare the lives of those who are then sold into slavery. The former practice is an activity of private citizens. By the Mosaic law's standards, this was a capital crime.

Paul's identification of kidnapping as a sin is an extension of the Mosaic case law against kidnapping. What changed with the New Testament were the Mosaic laws of warfare. The Mosaic laws of warfare were applications of the Mosaic land laws. Israel was not to bring into its territories large numbers of slaves from a single nation. There was always the threat of a revenge-based uprising. By restricting the importation of male slaves who were the victims of other nations' armies, and by importing slaves from a multitude of nations, Israel was to reduce the threat of internal rebellion. The nation was not to use slave harvesting as a way to finance an empire.

Israel was required to execute all the males of a defeated city whose rulers had refused to surrender. This law did not extend into the New Covenant. First, it was a land law that was tied to Israel as holy ground. Second, the spread of the gospel is no longer dependent on one nation's missionary efforts, as had been the case under the Mosaic Covenant. Covenant-keepers in the New Testament reside in many lands. They represent many ecclesiastical and national traditions. To execute all of the male residents of a city whose rulers had failed to surrender would be to undermine the work of evangelism. The church has never called upon civil magistrates to adopt this Mosaic law. On the contrary, the church through the centuries has steadily adopted a view of warfare that exempts civilians and non-combatants from deliberate military sanctions, either during the war or after. The twentieth century saw a reversal of this view of warfare, but that bloody century was a humanist-dominated era.

The vast supplies of slaves that had been the result of foreign nations' non-enforcement of the Mosaic law of post-war extermination ended when Rome ceased to conquer territory. By the time that Christian emperors ascended to the throne, the Roman Empire was in its contraction phase. Steadily, Christianity adopted a new view of warfare: warriors vs. warriors. While a small supply of slaves from defeated tribes or cities did trickle into Europe during the Middle Ages, this was nowhere close to the scale of either Roman enslavement[27] or

27. Meltzer, *Slavery*, I, chaps. 14, 15.

the enslavement of Africans that began in the year 1444.[28] The slave trade became a minor aspect of the medieval European economy, for foreign trade became minimal.

2. African Slavery

When the economy changed in the West, the two means of obtaining large numbers of slaves were kidnapping from Africa and breeding slaves domestically. The former practice is illegal in terms of biblical law, and the latter practice has involved the destruction of marriage and the family among the slaves.[29] Western slavery after 1444 always rested on the denial of biblical law. It was a system based on legalized kidnapping. The West's slave system after the discovery of the Atlantic sugar islands in the late fifteenth century brought mass slavery back to the West for the first time since the fourth century. Slavery became predominantly African slavery. The supplies of West African slaves were increased by coastal tribes that made war on interior tribes as part of harvesting operations. This was deliberate kidnapping by the state. The coastal tribes did not seek to occupy a foreign tribe's land as a means of extending the dominion of the coastal tribe. West African warfare became primarily an economic operation: slave harvesting. The West's slave traders were in an alliance with professional kidnappers. They were accomplices. The British Navy put an end to this alliance in the nineteenth century.

The only theological basis for justifying a New Testament extension of the slave system of Mosaic Israel would be (1) the abandonment of the medieval concept of limited warfare, and (2) the re-establishment of the lawful enslavement of defeated civilian populations. Mosaic Israel imported slaves from abroad—slaves that were either the captives of war or the heirs of such captives (Lev. 25:44–46). It was illegal to import the victims of kidnapping. The Mosaic law against kidnapping was not a land law, which is why Paul cited it in verse 10.

Paul's identification of kidnapping as sinful unto damnation was important in the development of the abolitionist movement in the United States. This influence began with the ecclesiastical trial of Rev. George Bourne. This was a landmark case in American Protestantism prior to the Civil War (1861–65). In 1815, Bourne, a Presbyterian minister in Harrisonburg, Virginia, presented an overture to the

28. Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1440–1870* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), p. 21.

29. See Appendix D:E.

General Assembly to condemn slavery as anti-Christian. He based his condemnation primarily on I Timothy 1:10: manstealing. He was defrocked for this by his Presbytery when he returned from General Assembly. He appealed his case to the General Assembly the next year. Officially, the General Assembly had adopted I Timothy 1:10 in a condemnation of slavery in 1806, but this had not been ratified by the presbyteries. The General Assembly then retroactively eliminated this section from its rules, leaving Bourne with only the Bible to appeal to. His de-frocking was ratified by the General Assembly in 1818.[30] The Northern Presbyterian Church refused to condemn slavery until after the Civil War began. The Southern Presbyterian Church, which split from the Northern Church in 1861 when the war broke out, did not condemn slavery until after the South's defeat.[31] Bourne's ideas were picked up by the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison in the 1830s, although Garrison never acknowledged the source.[32] In this way, Bourne's antislavery crusade was brought into national politics. I Timothy 1:10 was officially the basis of this original ecclesiastical protest.

Conclusion

Paul in this passage defends the civil law of God. He cites specific Mosaic civil laws as examples of the law when it is being used lawfully. He challenges would-be teachers of the law who confuse the legal issue by offering fables and by arguing about genealogies. He identifies the Mosaic civil law as an aspect of the gospel (v. 11). No passage in the New Testament is more forthrightly theonomic.

Paul's concern in this passage is the presence of false teachers. He tells Timothy to stay in Ephesus and confront these false teachers. They were false teachers, not because they taught that the Mosaic civil law should still be enforced by gentile magistrates in the New Covenant era, but because they taught fables and detailed genealogies. Paul is identifying Judaizers, not gentile antinomians or gentile theonomists, as the false teachers in Ephesus.

Paul is not speaking of some theory of natural law, supposedly recognized as binding by all rational legal theorists, when he says

30. For an introduction to Rev. Bourne and his work, see John W. Christie and Dwight L. Dumond, *George Bourne and The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable* (Historical Society of Delaware and the Presbyterian History Society, 1969)

31. Gary North, *Crossed Fingers: How the Liberals Captured the Presbyterian Church* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1996), ch. 2.

32. Christie and Dumond, *George Bourne*, pp. 78–80; ch. 6.

that the law is good when it is used lawfully. The false teachers were not coming before the church at Ephesus in the name of Stoic natural law theory. The Stoics were not interested in genealogy. The Judaizers were interested in genealogy, for they were allies of the Pharisees. They were coming into a gentile church in the name of Moses. Paul asks Timothy to tell them to stop teaching their version of Pharisaic legalism. He calls on Timothy to continue the war that Paul had launched against them (v. 18).

The law (v. 8) refers to Mosaic civil laws (vv. 9–10). Paul's commandment to Timothy includes teaching the Mosaic civil law because civil law is inescapably a part of Christ's comprehensive kingdom of God in history. Civil law is a means of reducing crime and increasing safety and tranquility. It reduces the costs of dominion.

In my commentary on Leviticus, I distinguish among four judicial categories within the Mosaic civil law: laws governing land, laws governing seeds, which were both an aspect of Jacob's prophecy regarding Shiloh (Gen. 49:10), i.e., laws governing the separation of the tribes, which were annulled no later than A.D. 70 with the fall of Jerusalem;[33] laws governing Israel as a separate nation of priests,[34] which were annulled when there was a change in the priesthood (Heb. 7); and cross-boundary laws that applied to gentile nations such as Nineveh.[35] Only the cross-boundary laws are still in force.

The laws listed by Paul in this passage are cross-boundary laws. *They are permanent stipulations of God's civil covenantal order*. Not only did Paul never announce their annulment, he insists in this passage that they are aspects of God's law, lawfully used. By affirming their continuing validity, Paul implicitly asserts the continuing New Covenant validity of the concept of the civil covenant.

It is only by an oath that is publicly ratified under the Trinitarian God of the Bible that men can fully honor God in the realm of history: in church, family, and state. A state without an oath that is taken by every citizen under the Trinitarian God of the Bible is lawful, just as a family established without a similar oath under God is lawful, but neither institution is faithful to God. Common grace exists in both civil government and family government, but special grace is always preferable to common grace. Families and civil governments must be transformed by the gospel by way of God's gracious trans-

33. North, *Boundaries and Dominion*, Conclusion:C:1.
34. *Ibid*., Conclusion:C:2.
35. *Ibid*., Conclusion:C:3.

formation of human nature. The evidence of a widespread transformation of human nature will be the proliferation of both family and civil covenants that are publicly ratified by oath under the Trinitarian God of the Bible. This is what it means to baptize the nations (Matt. 28:19).[36] Working toward this outcome is what the Great Commission requires of Christians.[37] Comprehensive Trinitarian covenant ratification—personal, ecclesiastical, familial, and civil—will be the social and political result of what Paul calls "the commandment."

36. North, *Priorities and Dominion,* ch. 48.

37. Kenneth L. Gentry, *The Greatness of the Great Commission: The Christian Enterprise in a Fallen World* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990).

2

INTERCESSORY PRAYER AND ECCLESIASTICAL PEACE

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

I TIMOTHY 2:1–2

The theocentric focus of this passage is the power of God, who structures history for the benefit of His church. It is a call to intercessory prayer, meaning a call to honor God's vertical hierarchy. God's church is placed above civil magistrates in this hierarchy of intercession. By speaking on behalf of all men, including civil magistrates, the church brings peace for itself and its members. The church is therefore a representative: point two of the biblical covenant.[1]

A. The Power of Prayer

1. Invoking God's Power

It is common to speak of the power of prayer. What most people mean by this phrase is the power of God to answer specific prayers. Prayer is the means of invoking God's power in history. The person offering the prayer calls on God to intervene in history and direct events so that the desire of the prayer-offerer is fulfilled. He believes that God can and does exercise power over creation. The creation is governed by a supernatural hierarchy.

1. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 2. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, [1980] 2010), ch. 2.

Paul here exhorts the church to pray for all men. The meaning of the word translated as "exhort" is closer to "plead." It is often translated as "beseech." Paul is not casually recommending something; he is pleading with his listeners and readers to perform a duty. Such prayer is not to be an afterthought. Prayer along these lines is not to be a peripheral activity. It is important for the corporate life of the church.

Prayer takes time, forethought, and self-discipline. It may take a self-conscious overcoming of personal revulsion in the case of praying for a ruler who is a persecutor or debauched. This is not a spiritual discipline familiar to uncommitted Christians. Paul says that a specific result should be expected from this form of prayer: the peace of the church. This is a high-level goal. Paul implies that without prayer, this goal is less likely to be attained.

This passage proclaims a cause-and-effect relationship between prayer and external corporate peace. Paul is not speaking here of individual psychological contentment. He says that the church can attain tolerance through intercessory prayer. Because of prayers offered on behalf of all men, including men placed in authority over society, the church will be left in peace.

2. God's Absolute Sovereignty

This cause-and-effect relationship would not exist, were it not for the ability and willingness of God to ordain external events so that His church can be left in peace. A man is supposed to pray to God on the assumption that God is sovereign over the affairs of men. If God were not in a position to answer such prayers, the prayers would have no power independent of the intercessor's actions. Paul's exhortation implies that the world is personal cosmically.[2] Society is under God's authority. If this were not the case, then these prayers would be powerless. Their effects would be either random or negative.

God is at the top of the *cosmic hierarchy* that is implied by this passage. A God who controls the affairs of men is not some minor deity. He tells His people to call on Him to bring peace to the church. In some fundamental way, God wants His people to acknowledge that He possesses sovereign power. His people are to acknowledge formally through their prayers that God, not man, is in charge.

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2. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1982] 2012), ch. 1.

3. Representation and Hierarchy

Paul uses three nouns: supplications, prayers, and intercessions. All three can be translated as "prayer." The Greek word here translated as "intercessions" is elsewhere translated as "prayer." "For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (I Tim. 4:5). The meaning of "supplication" here is close to "petition." In this case, it is *a petition on behalf of others*, yet indirectly for the *peace of the church*. An intercession is a prayer on behalf of others. The person praying is interceding. He is an agent for the one being prayed for.

This prayer is not selfless. It seeks a benefit for the intercessor: the peace of the church. The means to this end is prayer on behalf of all men. This seems to be an exclusively positive sanction, but it is not. This prayer can produce either a blessing or a curse on the person being prayed for. Paul wrote to the church at Rome:

> Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good (Romans 12:19–21).

The ruler is judicially above the person offering the prayer, yet the latter is in a position cosmically superior to the ruler. He can call authoritatively on the Ruler of the universe. *The civil hierarchy is under the cosmic hierarchy*. A covenant-keeper who is a subordinate to the civil ruler is in a position to benefit the civil ruler through the hierarchy of prayer.

This indicates that there are *multiple hierarchies* operating in God's kingdom. Power in hierarchies is invoked by words. God spoke the world into existence (Gen. 1). A civil ruler speaks, and his will is carried out because he possesses power. Ultimately, a ruler has the power to impose sanctions, both positive and negative. These sanctions are invoked by words, but they are not limited in their effects to words.

The Christian offers petitions to God on behalf of men, and his words produce positive results. *The essence of faith in prayer is the confidence that covenant-keepers legitimately possess, through the authority of their words, the ability to alter their environment*. This was the confession of the Roman centurion to Christ.

> And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come

> and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel (Matt. 8:5–10).

4. The Centurion's Confession

The centurion understood that Christ possessed authority because Christ was uniquely under God's authority. Just as the centurion could command men and would be obeyed because he was under a civil authority that possessed great power, so Christ could command nature because He was under an authority who possessed power over nature. Jesus' response to the centurion's comparison was to say that He had not heard so great a confession of faith in Israel.

The centurion's confession identified Christ as being under God and over nature. Despite his official power under Rome's civil authority—the civil hierarchy—the centurion fully understood that he was not sufficiently worthy to have Christ under his roof. This was his personal reason for not inviting Christ to come to his home to cure his servant. He verbally subordinated himself to Christ, and then asked Christ to heal his servant. He thereby publicly acknowledged that he needed an intercessor with God on behalf of his servant if his servant was to be healed. To gain dominion over his servant's illness, he subordinated himself publicly to Christ.

The centurion had a second reason for not inviting Christ into his home: it was not necessary for Christ to be present in his home in order for Him to heal the servant. Christ's authority was not limited by geography, any more than the centurion's rule required that he be present for his orders to be obeyed. *The mark of great authority is independence from geographical constraints*.

This was a confession of the existence of the same two hierarchies that are implied by Paul's instruction to Timothy. The civil ruler who exercises authority over the church is in fact under the church's authority because of his subordination to the God who controls events. The centurion understood this and confessed it. Because of this, Christ healed his servant. The centurion achieved his goal by confessing the existence of the two hierarchies, civil and cosmic. He identified his own authority as being inferior to Christ's. He was confessing Christ over Caesar. This is what made his confession of faith unique during Jesus' ministry.

The evidence of power is the degree of consistency between what is requested and what results. The centurion's confession of Christ's authority under God and over nature rested on the analogy of his own authority. "For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." He spoke, and his words were obeyed by his subordinates. So also could Jesus speak, he confessed, and His words would be obeyed. This is a statement regarding cause and effect: *words produce otherwise unpredictable results*, but they do so only because of *personal hierarchy*. Men's words possess no autonomous power. God's words do (Gen. 1). The centurion understood that Christ could speak a word and heal his servant: "... say in a word, and my servant shall be healed" (Luke 7:7). It is not clear whether he believed that Christ is God, who could therefore speak a healing word directly, or else that He was so completely under God's authority that God would bring to pass whatever Christ spoke. Because of Christ's nature is both divine and human—two natures in one person—we cannot be certain about this, either. It is not clear whether Christ's power over nature was direct during His earthly ministry, as the creator God (Col. 1:15–17), or intercessory, as the perfect human and only begotten son of God.

Paul's exhortation has meaning only in terms of *the predictability of cause and effect*. The church's prayers on behalf of all men, including rulers, would produce peace for the church. There is *power in prayer* because there is *hierarchy in the creation*. God is over the creation, so that words directed to Him by His people on behalf of others will produce a predictable result: peace for the church. The power of prayer testifies to the power of God in history and to the authority of His covenant with His church.

B. The Goal of Peace

In English, there is a phrase, "peace and quiet." Paul here identifies quiet and peace as dual goals for the church. He does not explain why these two goals are desirable. He does not have to. In this sense, peace and quiet are aspects of common grace. All men understand the advantages of peace and quiet. Paul does not present a logical case for the value of the benefit of peace. He assumes that anyone who reads this passage will understand the benefit.

1. Persecution and Peace

It is a commonplace observation that the church has flourished under persecution. This was surely the case during the Roman Empire. But persecution during that long period was intermittent. Times of systematic persecution were followed by times of relative peace, when Roman rulers ignored the church. In modern times, Communist rulers in China persecuted Christians for over two decades, from their ascension to power in 1949 through the Red Guard era of the late 1960s. The number of Protestants in China in 1949 when the Communists took over the mainland has been estimated to have been as few as 750,000. During the persecution years of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), churches disappeared from public view. Today, everything has changed. Estimates of membership range from an official government estimate of 25 million to unofficial estimates of 130 million.[3]

Persecution under Islam, however, has not resulted in similar growth. The church in North Africa was completely destroyed in the seventh century by Arab armies. The Armenian church has suffered from repeated persecutions at the hands of the Turks over several centuries, culminating in the genocide of 1915–16. The Armenian church has survived, but it would not be accurate to say that it has flourished.

A legitimate goal for the church is peace. This is what all men seek for themselves, and Paul declares that the means to this legitimate goal is prayer on behalf of all men, including rulers. The peace that is attained through prayer on behalf of people who are outside the church is not a peace associated with spiritual lethargy. It is also not a peace established through the benevolence of covenant-breakers. It is an *active peace* sought through *active prayer*. It is an otherwise unexplainable peace, a peace that publicly confirms God's covenant with covenant-keepers. It also confirms the power of God to establish peace by His own authority.

The peace that Paul discusses here is the peace established through active prayer on behalf of God's covenantal enemies. The means of peace for a hated minority that would not conform to imperial Rome's liturgically mandatory pluralism of gods was intercessory prayer. Paul tells Timothy that he is to seek peace for the church by prayers for God's enemies offered on behalf of persecutors and potential persecutors.

Paul's exhortation was necessary because prayer, especially public

3. "Sons of Heaven," *The Economist* (Oct. 2, 2008)

prayer, for men in general and for pagan rulers specifically is not an intuitive discipline. The benefits, peace and quiet, are universally desired, but the cause-and-effect relationship between intercessory prayer and peace and quiet is also not intuitive.

2. Pluralism's Counterfeit Peace

There is another kind of peace: *the peace of unconcern*. This is the kind of peace that is sought by defenders of political pluralism: the civil equality of all religions. Access to citizenship is officially opened to members of every religious faith. The civil oath is designed to be neutral theologically. In fact, a legally enforceable theological confession is outlawed as a screening device for the exercise of civil authority.[4]

Political pluralism is not taught in the Bible. There has yet to be an exegetical defense of a theory of political pluralism in terms of the Bible. Paul is not calling for a peace based on the official irrelevance of the God of the Bible for the civil realm.

Peace is also not based on the presumption of a legal order that is neutral toward God. In the previous section of this epistle, Paul identified several Mosaic civil laws as marks of a sound confession (1:9–10).[5] God's law is designed to punish the violators of such statutes, he said. This is what it means to use the law lawfully (1:8).

Legitimate peace results from the establishment of a kingdom of saints, that is, a society whose civil covenant is based on a Trinitarian confession. The civil persecution of the church by the state should stop. But peace was not the experience of the West under Christian rule. Ecclesiastical leaders sought more than a Trinitarian confession for citizenship and peace. They regarded the theological grammar of the Athanasian creed as insufficient for citizenship and peace. They demanded the civil enforcement of Trinitarian dialects. This led to ecclesiocracy under Roman Catholicism and national civil wars under Protestantism: in Germany (1618–48) and Great Britain (1642–49). Political pluralism was the solution offered by Christians and unitarians in their quest for peace in nations torn asunder by warring sects of Trinitarians. By 1660, the civil wars of northern Europe had persuaded a small minority of intellectuals that there cannot be civil peace in a political world of religious test oaths for citizenship.

4. Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), Part 3.

5. Chapter 1.

This theory was initially voiced publicly in 1642 by Roger Williams, the leader of the tiny North American colony of Rhode Island, who was also a defender of autonomous local church congregations. The only legitimate multi-layered covenantal hierarchy is civil, Williams taught, and it must not be tied to any reference to God.

In 1788, the United States became the first Christian society to establish a national civil covenant devoid of theological confession. Article VI, Section 3 of the United States Constitution banned religious test oaths for holding national office.[6] Williams' Rhode Island colony had set the pattern.

One result in the United States by 1973 was the creation of a civil order in which the slaying of unborn children was legalized by the highest court in the land. This decision was implicitly ratified by tens of millions of voters, whose elected representatives have the authority to amend the Constitution, but have chosen not to, out of fear of political reprisals. A majority of the voters prefer the legalization of abortion on demand. There is no neutrality possible between life and death. Humanists and pietistic Christians have chosen to accept the legalization of the death of the judicially innocent, in the name of maternal sovereignty. Preceding this legal development by about a decade and then paralleling it, the execution of convicted murderers almost disappeared, despite Genesis 9:6, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." The murder rate has risen. When the cost of committing a crime is reduced by law, more of this crime is supplied. Men cry peace, peace, but there is no peace (Jer. 6:14; 8:11). There is no peace for the unwanted unborn in the United States. There is also no peace for the families of the victims of murderers.

Under such judicial conditions, covenant-keepers can and should expect the visible corporate judgment of God. Jeremiah told the Israelites, "And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin" (Jer. 32:35). The result was the Babylonian captivity.

6. This was important for non-Christians who wanted to serve in the United States Senate. Most of the states in 1787 retained Trinitarian test oaths for holders of any state office. State legislatures elected Senate members until the Constitution was amended in 1913. Senators came from the ranks of state legislatures. Apart from Article VI, Section 3, a non-Christian politician could not be elected to the Senate because he could not be elected by a state.

The Israelites abandoned that hideous practice after their return to Israel. They had been slow learners. God had imposed negative corporate sanctions as a tool of education. He applied similar judicial sanctions on the American South in 1861–65 for a sin far less horrendous than the legalization of abortion.[7]

C. The Price of Peace

Intercessory prayer is both active and time-consuming. It takes systematic self-discipline to achieve it. It also takes faith that God's universe is covenantal. Such prayer is not a zero-cost good. It is exceedingly scarce. This is the economist's way of describing short supply at the price offered by the buyers. It is not that the value of peace is low; rather, it is that the recipients of the offer—Christians—neither recognize nor believe in this relationship between the price of such prayer and the supply of peace. They do not believe that the benefits offered by God—peace and quiet—will predictably be paid by God. They also do not perceive the difficulty of achieving the personal habit of sustained prayer on behalf of covenant-breakers. So, the cost is higher than they perceive. They do not perceive the fixed relationship between the expenditure and the promised benefit. They cease to make the necessary investment before the benefit is delivered. This is a common temptation. It should be avoided. "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).[8]

Some formal church liturgies include regular prayers for rulers. These tend to be high-church liturgies. Very few people ever pray them publicly. It is likely that even fewer pray such prayers in private. I have come across no liturgy that includes prayers for men in general in the context of the quest for peace.

Eschatology is another factor contributing to the absence of prayers on behalf of all men. Only postmillennialism teaches that the vast majority of mankind will at some point in time confess Christ and be baptized in His name. Men do not spend time praying for what they have been told is an impossibility eschatologically. They conserve their time and emotional commitment by praying for things that they believe are possible. They avoid praying for that which they believe is eschatologically prohibited.

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7. Appendix D.

8. Gary North, *Treasure and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Luke*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 20.

This does not mean that amillennialism and premillennialism prohibit prayers that invoke God's common grace, e.g., prayers that promote all men's greater conformity to the work of the law written in their hearts (Rom. 2:14–15).[9] But this aspect of God's common grace is rarely discussed from the pulpit or in volumes on systematic theology, which in turn are rarely read by laymen or even pastors. In general, the doctrine of common grace is not well understood, even in Calvinist circles that have a formal tradition of incorporating the doctrine into their systematic theologies.

Later in this epistle, Paul presents another important doctrine of common grace: the doctrine of the non-regenerative salvation of sinners, i.e., their healing in history, though not necessarily in eternity.[10] "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe" (I Tim. 4:10).[11] Pastors rarely preach on this verse. They do not know what to do with it. Paul did. He instructed the church to pray on behalf of all men.

D. Giving Thanks for All Mankind

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." Here is an unexpected requirement for effective prayer. Christians are to give thanks for all men, including covenant-breaking rulers. Why?

First, giving thanks for all men has something to do with general thanksgiving. Elsewhere, Paul wrote: "See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (I Thes. 5:15–18). History is the outworking of the providence of God. As such, all aspects of the creation deserve thanks, for God's glory is the goal of all things.

Second, other people are part of God's general dominion covenant with Adam (Gen. 1:26–28),[12] which was reconfirmed with Noah (Gen. 9:1–2).[13] Men are required by God to subdue the earth. God's

9. Gary North, *Cooperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012)), ch. 3.

10. Gary North, *Dominion and Common Grace: The Biblical Basis of Progress* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987), ch. 6.

11. Chapter 6.

12. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, chaps. 3, 4.

13. *Ibid.*, ch. 18.

delegation of authority and its accompanying responsibility has not been revoked. This is not widely understood by Christians. They do not see the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18–20) as an aspect of the call to subdue the earth, yet this is what it is.[14]

The division of labor is inescapable for the subduing of the earth. Men's talents vary ("labor").[15] So do their environments, meaning their original resources ("land").[16] Cooperation is necessary for maximizing men's productivity.

> There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail. Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up (Eccl. 4:8–10).

This cooperation extends from the family to the entire world. The division of labor is international. This is the basis of world trade. It began with the formation and scattering of the nations after the tower of Babel (Gen. 11).[17]

Conclusion

Covenantal social peace does not come automatically. It comes in response to systematic covenant-keeping. One aspect of this mandatory covenant-keeping is the frequent performance of this type of prayer. This prayer is the designated means for the establishment of peace, especially in times and regions where Christians are in the minority and are perceived as a threat to the existing political order because they call men to allegiance to a different Sovereign.

Western Christians have adopted political pluralism in an attempt to avoid the accusation of being a threat to the established pagan order, both social and political, but this does not achieve their goal for long. Covenant-breakers recognize their confessional enemies, and

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14. Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *The Greatness of the Great Commission: The Christian Enterprise in a Fallen World* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990). Cf. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [20000] 2012), ch. 48.

15. North, *Cooperation and Dominion*, ch. 8; cf. Gary North, *Judgment and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), ch. 15.

16. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, ch. 19.

17. *Idem*.

therefore seek to restrict their influence. Imperial Rome's polytheistic pluralists recognized the threat of Christianity to the sacred order of Rome.[18] Despite the protests of early Christian theologians, and despite their accurate observation that the Christians were the most obedient and productive members of the Empire, the Caesars knew better. They knew that Christians did not and could not in good conscience make the confession of Christ's accusers: "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15). It was a confessional war to the death. Christians won it.

Christians were subordinate to Rome's civil government in everything but their confession of faith. But it was their rival confession regarding the authority of God that led to Rome's war against them and Christendom's eventual replacement of classical paganism for a thousand years.

This incomparable victory of Christian confession over pagan confession appalled Renaissance humanists, who dismissed Christian civilization as "the Dark Ages." They called their era a renaissance, i.e., a re-birth: a re-birth of classical paganism. Christianity's confessional victory over Imperial Rome has also embarrassed humanist-influenced Protestant intellectuals, who dismiss the ideal of Christendom as "Constantianism." They agree entirely with Renaissance humanists on this point: the illegitimacy of the ideal of Christendom. They teach that Trinitarian confession is illegitimate for the civil covenant. They say that the civil covenant must somehow be made neutral regarding all supernatural religion. The problem with this position is easy to state: *there is no neutrality*. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12:30). There is always a god of the civil covenant. The god of every society is its source of law.[19] The question is: Which god?

18. R. J. Rushdoony, *The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy* (Vallecito, California: Ross House, [1971] 2007), ch. 5.

19. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1973), p. 4.

3

MONOGAMY AND SOCIAL ORDER

> *This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach.*
>
> I TIMOTHY 3:1–2

The theocentric principle that undergirds the law mandating monogamous church officers is the love of Christ for His church (Eph. 5:25–33). Christ is not a bigamist. He has only one bride: the church. There is only one marriage supper of the lamb (Rev. 19:7–9).

This section of the epistle is an aspect of hierarchy: the screening of ecclesiastical officers. This is an aspect of vertical hierarchy: point two of the biblical covenant.[1]

A. God's Lawful Divorce of Old Covenant Israel

The following background material is necessary to understand Paul's requirement that a candidate for bishop must be the husband of one wife.

The Old Testament presents Israel as a faithless nation. Even before Israel conquered Canaan, God had warned the nation against future corporate apostasy. The Mosaic Covenant repeatedly used the imagery of a harlot or an adulteress to describe false worship. "Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; And thou take of their daugh-

1. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 2. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, [1980] 2010), ch. 2.

ters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods" (Ex. 34:15–16). "And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations" (Lev. 17:7).

Prior to the exile, Israel repeatedly worshipped other gods. By doing this, the nation became adulterous. These other gods were local and plural. Israel therefore became polygamous when she became polytheistic. Such spiritual polygamy was a form of harlotry. It was apostasy. Apostasy was a capital crime (Deut. 13:6–11).

God nevertheless remained faithful to Israel, just as the prophet Hosea remained faithful to his wife, a former harlot. God had commanded Hosea to marry her (Hosea 1:2) as a public testimony to Israel's fallen ethical condition (Hosea 3:1). Hosea's marriage testified to the fact of God's faithfulness to Israel despite Israel's unfaithfulness to God.

The Book of Hosea declares the mercy of God, for God had the right to divorce Israel, either by sending her away, just as Joseph initially planned to send Mary away (Matt. 1:19), or else by executing her, every time Israel replaced the worship of God with the worship of other gods. It was also God's legal right to forgive Israel. The principle of victim's rights is the fundamental principle of biblical justice.[2] This is why Jesus, as the victim, could lawfully declare from the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34b). Peter announced to the Jews, "And now, brethren, I wot [know] that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers" (Acts 3:17). This is exactly what Jesus had said on the cross.

Mercy is God's option in dealing with covenant-breaking, but it is not God's obligation. Forgiveness by Christians is required,[3] but not in the absence of repentance and restitution. God forgives apart from the sinner's restitution, which Christ alone has paid in full, but not without the sinner's repentance. The sinner is commanded by God to repent: to turn around ethically. God showed mercy to Israel until the day of Pentecost that followed the crucifixion of Christ (Acts 2). Until that day, God had not formally established a covenant with another nation. But Israel had been forewarned by Jesus that this would soon happen. Jesus had told the leaders of Israel that this new covenantal

2. Gary North, *Victim's Rights: The Biblical View of Civil Justice* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990).

3. "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:21–22).

administration would arrive during their lifetimes. "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43). His listeners understood that this prophecy was not regarding distant events. "And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them" (Matt. 21:45).

Peter on Pentecost announced a great divorce. This divorce was implied by his demand that his listeners be baptized (Acts 2:38). Baptism on that day replaced circumcision as the mandatory covenant mark. Circumcision, the mark of God's priestly covenant with Abraham, had been required of no other nation. This was because God had established a priestly covenant with no other nation. Only Israel was a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6). National circumcision had been the mark of a nation's entry into the nation of Israel, a mark of *covenantal adoption*. This is why the slaying of the newly circumcised Shechemites was a horrible crime, as Jacob knew (Gen. 34:30). This is also why the replacement of circumcision with baptism marked the definitive end of the Old Covenant order, which faded progressively until A.D. 70, when it ended forever. Ever since Peter's sermon at Pentecost, God has not required gentiles to be circumcised in order for them to enter into a priestly covenant with Him. Instead, God has required Jews to be baptized in order for them to enter into covenant with Him. They must be adopted into His church.

This replacement of circumcision with baptism testified to Peter's listeners regarding God's replacement of Old Covenant Israel with the New Covenant church as His bride. *God publicly divorced national Israel at Pentecost*. He then gave the nation additional time to repent corporately and enter into His new marriage covenant through baptism. When national Israel refused, He publicly executed her in A.D. 70.[4] Jews survived; national Israel did not.

Throughout the transition period, God retained His legal status as a monogamist. *God has only one bride at a time*. The mark of circumcision was no longer a covenant sign of membership in God's corporate bride after Peter's sermon at Pentecost. He did not execute Israel for several decades, but for Jews, circumcision no longer gained them access to God's kingdom. Peter had made this clear to the temple's officials: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from

4. David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987).

the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:10–12). The Jews had removed the cornerstone from the structure of Old Covenant Israel. The structure could not visibly survive for long. God's divorce of Old Covenant Israel was final.

The historical means of Christ's transfer of the kingdom of God from national Israel to the church was His subordination to God at the cross. He voluntarily submitted to the pagan civil court of Rome and the apostate ecclesiastical court of the Sanhedrin. The cross placed Him under death's power. Then He visibly defeated death at the resurrection. This gained Him total power over history. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18).

B. Jews and Gentiles on Monogamy

In I Timothy 3:1–2, Paul presents a series of criteria for holding the office of bishop.[5] The initial criterion for three church offices—bishop, deacon, elder—is monogamous marriage: "the husband of one wife." The question is: Why? We are not told specifically, either in this passage or in the others in which Paul establishes this ordination requirement. We must therefore search for reasons, first, in terms of the *context* of this law. Then we must search for additional reasons in terms of the *effects* of both monogamy and polygamy.

In this epistle's opening verses, Paul instructed Timothy to challenge certain false teachers who had a fondness for genealogies and fables (1:4). This has to refer to Judaizers.[6] In the epistle to Titus, he referred derisively to Jewish fables (Titus 1:14). He also referred to "many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision" (Titus 1:10). He warned: "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain" (Titus 3:9) In that epistle, too, he listed this criterion for elders: one wife (1:6). In both epistles, Paul's targets were the Judaizers. He established monogamy as a criterion for church office, which was calculated to offend defenders of polygamy. Who were the defenders of polygamy? Jews.

5. On the definition of "bishop," see chapter 4.

6. William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1957), pp. 58–59.

What about the gentiles? Was polygamy so common in gentile churches that Paul had to mention this criterion specifically, in order to challenge the practice of having multiple wives? On the contrary, monogamy was the standard, both culturally and legally, in Greece and Rome. Some of the Macedonian kings had practiced polygamy. So had succeeding kings in the Greek-speaking dynasties that replaced Alexander's brief empire. The result was chaos: murderous stepbrothers striving for the crown, intrigue by mothers and sons against other mothers and sons.[7] In contrast, classical Greece's texts indicate that the early Greeks did not practice polygamy, although captive slave women who performed sexual services were common. The *Iliad* begins with a conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles over the ownership of a such a slave. Greek society was monogamous. The few exceptions prove the rule. Polygamy was authorized by Athens after the military disaster at Sicily, during the Pelopponesian War, in 413 B.C. The limit was two wives.[8] Euripides' play, *Medea*, was the story of a rejected, vindictive first wife.[9] It can be interpreted as a divorce rather than polygamy. Whether this play was about simultaneous polygamy or serial polygamy, the result was the destruction of her family. Hellenistic society in Paul's era was monogamous. Inheritance was through the monogamous family.

Rome was strictly monogamous. The father's role as the head of the household was unquestioned: the *paterfamilias*. His heirs came exclusively through his wife unless they had been adopted. Adultery and divorce did become common among the upper classes, beginning no later than the late republic phase of Rome's history.[10] The poet Ovid was a great promoter of adultery for married men. His licentious poetry was popular. The Emperor Augustus banned him from the capital and exiled him to a distant province. This took place in Jesus' lifetime (A.D. 8). The cause of his exile is unknown for sure, but it is believed by some historians that it may have been the emperor's concern over the moral breakdown in his own family. His daughter was a notorious adulterer. Monogamy was the standard, just as it is today under similar moral conditions governing marriage.

In Paul's day, there were Jews in the Greek-speaking congrega-

7. Daniel Ogden, *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death: The Hellenic Dynasties* (London: Duckworth, 1999).

8. *Ibid*., p. xxvi.

9. *Ibid*., p. xxvii.

10. Keith R. Bradley, *Discovery of the Roman Family: Studies in Roman Social History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), ch. 7.

tions. There were Jews in Roman congregations. Paul does not explicitly say—nor does any New Testament passage explicitly say—that polygamy is banned by God's law. But he says repeatedly that no one who is not a husband of one wife can become a bishop or a deacon. This meant that a polygamous Jew had to be denied ordination by the church.

The Judaizers were Paul's exclusive contemporary targets when he set forth monogamy as a requirement for church office. He wanted them out of the church completely. In his main epistle against them, Galatians, he even used sarcasm regarding them, whom he called "the circumcision" (Gal. 2:7–9): "I would they were even cut off which trouble you" (Gal. 5:12). He surely wanted them barred from church offices.

C. Polygamy Under the Old Covenant

Polygamy was part of the Old Covenant, beginning no later than Abraham.[11] There was a Mosaic law of inheritance associated with polygamy: a double portion for the oldest son, even if he was the son of the unloved wife (Deut. 21:15–17).[12] This indicates that polygamy can raise the issue of which wife is loved most. In this Mosaic case law, one wife was not loved at all. The Old Testament's model of the unloved wife is Leah (Gen. 29:30). God therefore gave her favor: she had many children, while Rachel initially had none (Gen. 29:31). This created a major disruption in Jacob's family. It led to two additional wives (Gen. 30:4, 9). The envious[13] sons (Gen. 37:11) of all three wives later combined to sell the oldest son of Rachel into slavery. They told their father that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal, which brought great sorrow to him for seventeen years, until the family's descent into Egypt (Gen. 37). Envy also afflicted Moses' family: Aaron and Miriam revolted against Moses because of his sec-

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11. There are Web sites on which Orthodox Jews promote polygamy. But polygamy is uncommon among Orthodox Jews, just as it is among Mormons. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has never formally abandoned polygamy as an ideal, only as an acceptable practice in contemporary non-Mormon societies.

12. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 49.

13. Envy is the desire to tear down someone who is perceived as being higher in status, wealth, or favor. The envious person does not expect to gain the advantage of the envied person after the tearing down takes place. Jealousy is the desire to take the advantage away from the person and appropriate it for oneself. On the distinction between envy and jealousy, see Helmut Schoeck, *Envy: A Theory of Social Behavior* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, [1966] 1969). The King James translators translated the same Hebrew word both ways.

ond wife (Num. 12:1). There is no mention of Zipporah's having died. Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel, lived in a polygamous household. The second wife deliberately vexed Hannah because of Hannah's barrenness (I Sam. 1:6). Envy afflicted David's polygamous family: incest and murder (II Sam. 13). All of the polygamous households that are mentioned in the Old Testament were troubled with dissention. In Solomon's case, his polygamy led to his false worship. Because of this, Israel was divided during his son's reign. "Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant" (I Kings 11:11).

1. Legality

This raises a crucial question: If polygamy has such negative consequences, why was it legal under the Old Covenant? If, for example, allowing one man to have several wives leaves younger men with no opportunity to marry, why did God allow this practice for his people for at least two millennia before Christ? Finally, if polygamy really is evil, then what New Testament principle implicitly annuls the Old Testament's laws that regulated polygamy? No explicit New Testament commandment mentions this annulment for the laity, only for church officers. In the Mosaic law, only the king was required to be monogamous (Deut. 17:17).

Under the Mosaic law, there was a way to minimize the effects of polygamy on unmarried young men who could not locate women to marry. There was a way to expand the pool of eligible women—at a price. It was legal for covenant-keeping men to marry foreign women under certain circumstances. Foreign slave women could be purchased from Israelite households or from abroad. The inter-generational enslavement of foreigners was legal (Lev. 25:44–46).[14] Also, there were laws governing marriage to foreign widows and orphaned daughters after the Israelites had annihilated every male after a victorious war conducted outside of Canaan (Deut. 21:10–14).

Living as a permanent servant inside an Israelite household was considered the equivalent of membership in the assembly. All males living permanently in the household of an Israelite had to be circumcised (Gen. 17:10–13). Every circumcised male had lawful access to

14. Gary North, *Boundaries and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Leviticus*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1994] 2012), ch. 31.

Passover (Ex. 12:48), unless he was under some judicial condemnation. A female had no covenant mark on her, so her mere presence as a permanent member of an Israelite household made her eligible for Passover and therefore also marriage to an Israelite. A foreign woman who covenanted with God outside the land could lawfully be married, as the cases of Rahab and Ruth prove.

2. Marriage As Adoption

The legal issue was adoption. A permanent foreign female slave was automatically adopted into the household of her owner; otherwise, she would not have been eligible to attend Passover. She of course could not worship foreign gods in the household (Deut. 13:6–11). Solomon's wives broke this law, and it was a major sin on his part that he allowed this (I Kings 11).

An Israelite who wanted a wife and who could not find one from among the pool of eligible free women could buy a foreign female slave from an Israelite household. He could then marry her, if she consented. Also, there was no law prohibiting the purchase of a female slave from resident aliens. "Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession" (Lev. 25:45). Resident alien fathers were allowed to sell their daughters into slavery. Also, a resident alien who took on a debt that could not be repaid could be sold into slavery. His children could lawfully be sold.

The purchase of resident aliens as slaves was a form of evangelism. It liberated them from the reign of foreign household gods. In the same sense that the purchase of a resident alien slave was a means of evangelism, so was marriage to a foreign woman who agreed to give up her gods. An Israelite male was not restricted to marrying a free woman or a woman with no dowry (a concubine) who had been born to a circumcised Israelite.

By bringing foreigners under permanent household subordination in Old Covenant Israel, the Israelites made possible the foreigners' liberation from the bondage of sin and demonic powers. Judicial subordination could then produce eternal liberation.

Israelite males could marry slave women. This would have left some male slaves without wives. What were the negative social consequences of unmarried foreign male slaves inside Israel? Very few. Slaves were under tight governmental control—family control. They

were not a major threat to the social order. In any case, it was legal to buy foreign slaves from abroad. This option was open to the Israelite who owned male slaves without wives.

In the New Testament, church membership is by profession of faith and baptism. Females are baptized. Paul forbade Christians to marry non-Christians. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (II Cor. 6:14). Adoption is now by profession of faith and covenant sign, not by mere presence within a household. The preliminary requirement for a Christian marriage is a shared confession of faith. The standards of membership in the ecclesiastical covenant are now the same for men and women. This *New Testament equality* has changed the laws of marriage.

The Old Covenant's laws governing the permanent enslavement of foreigners were annulled by the New Covenant. These laws were part of the jubilee year's laws (Lev. 25). The jubilee laws were land laws; hence, they ceased to exist no later than A.D. 70, when Israel lost its covenantal status as the holy land. While the inter-generational enslavement of foreigners was not formally abolished by the New Testament, the jubilee law was in principle abolished by Jesus (Luke 4:16–21).[15] *Enslaving others inter-generationally is no longer a valid means of evangelism*. Adoption into God's kingdom is accomplished by peaceful evangelism, not by military conquest or enslavement. Today, the covenant extends beyond the narrow confines of Old Covenant Israel. It is therefore no longer legal for covenant-keepers to buy themselves wives from pagan families or nations. These forms of Old Covenant adoption are now annulled. Marriage is voluntary.

3. Covenantal Oath

A woman retains the right to say "no" to any suitor. A free woman possessed this authority under the Old Covenant. Marriage is covenantal. It is established by a covenantal oath. A father does not possess the authority to seal a marriage oath on behalf of a daughter. We see this in the case of Rebekah's father and brothers, who negotiated a bride price from Abraham's servant. They asked her before they took the goods. "And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou

15. Gary North, *Treasure and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Luke*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 6.

go with this man? And she said, I will go" (Gen. 24:57–58). Marriage is not the same as baptism, where the parents' representative oaths on behalf of those baptized under their authority are legal.[16] A baptized person has the authority to disavow the baptismal oath that had been made on his behalf by his parents. A New Testament era woman cannot lawfully be sold into marriage or forced into marriage by her father, let alone by an owner. She is not a slave who can be bought or sold. So, a suitor has no access to women for sale who can replace those free women who have been married by a polygamist.

New Covenant marriage laws are not the same as Old Covenant marriage laws. First, membership in the ecclesiastical covenant has changed for women: by confession and baptism, not merely by presence in an Israelite household. Second, the definition of what constitutes unequal yoking is also different: unshared confessions. Third, slavery has been annulled by Christ's fulfillment of the jubilee year and God's destruction of Old Covenant Israel.

Slavery and polygamy were related under the Old Covenant. The worst detrimental effects of polygamy on those covenant-keeping young men who could not locate wives were offset by the existence of resident alien female slaves who were eligible for marriage by purchase. This offsetting institutional arrangement is no longer legally available in a Christian society. In the same sense that slavery was not formally annulled by the New Covenant, so polygamy was not formally annulled. Both of these institutions were annulled by an extension of the same New Covenant principle: *adoption into God's family through the church is established exclusively by confession of faith and baptism*.[17]

The Mosaic law was a unit. Whenever a Mosaic statute was annulled by the New Covenant, this had an effect on other related laws. The annulment of the jubilee slave laws had an indirect effect on the Mosaic laws of marriage, for this change altered the laws governing adoption. *Marriage is a form of adoption*. The wife is brought into her husband's family. Ezekiel 16 is premised on the adoption aspect of marriage. God had found Jerusalem-Israel as a man finds an infant girl, brings her into his household, and later marries her. By coming under God's judicial protection in God's household, Israel was adopted by God. Circumcision meant adoption. For females, legally permanent presence in a household was adoption.

16. Anabaptists deny even this.
17. Appendix A:H.

The introduction of baptism—the New Testament's formal mark of adoption by God into the institutional church—changed the laws of marriage. No longer is the household adoption of women established judicially by purchase or by military conquest. It is not possible to make a non-Christian woman covenantally eligible for Christian marriage merely by purchasing her. Therefore, what was not a major threat to society under the Mosaic law—a shortage of marriageable women due to other men's polygamy—becomes a major threat under the New Covenant. To deal with this threat, the Christian West has always used both civil and ecclesiastical law to prohibit polygamy.

D. Monogamy as the New Testament's Ideal

A bishop must be married at some point before he is lawfully ordained. He must also have children. Candidates for bishop must manage their families well: "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)" (I Tim. 3:4–5).

Does this rule prohibit widowers from holding the office? The text gives no direct indication. We do know this much: no Mosaic law removed from office a priest whose wife had died. If a bishop's wife and his children die during a war or a plague, must he be removed from office? This seems highly unlikely. The legal issue here is marriage as a screening device for church officers. A successful marriage is one among several indications of high moral character and competent leadership ability.

What about childless candidates? Paul's language presumes that the candidate has children, or did at some point in his life. A childless man does not meet this criterion. The focus of Paul's concern here is the behavior of subordinates in the candidate's household. In Paul's list of criteria for deacons, the wife's characteristics are specifically mentioned: "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things" (I Tim. 3:11).

No polygamous man should be considered for the three senior church offices. He must be the husband of one wife. The texts contain the Greek word for "one": *mia*. It was not inserted by the translators. It is also not the Greek word for "a." Paul is not saying "one wife among many."

This indicates that the New Testament's ideal for marriage is monogamy. Monogamy was also the highest standard in the Old Testa-

ment, which is why Israel's kings were not allowed to be polygamous (Deut. 17:17). As we have already seen, the major polygamous leaders are pictured in the Old Testament as suffering because of it. The Mosaic law permitted polygamy; it did not recommend it.

A man who has been unlawfully divorced by a sinning wife—highly unlikely in Paul's day—should not be penalized by the church by being excluded from consideration for church office. Neither should a man who has lawfully divorced a lawless wife who would have been lawfully executed in Mosaic Israel. The church should regard both men as widowers. To ban either of them from church office is to undermine marriage by undermining marriage-protecting judicial sanctions of God's law.

I conclude that the Greek word *mia* is here translated correctly as "one." A candidate for the office of bishop, presbyter, or deacon must have been married at some point, and to only one wife at a time. This rule does not ban widowers who have remarried, nor does it ban men who have been unlawfully divorced or who have divorced their wives lawfully. Paul does not here annul the principle of victim's rights. The innocent man's lawful divorce of a guilty spouse does not bring on him the negative sanction of either removal from church office or banning from church office.

A bishop or a deacon must be married or have been married, i.e., a widower. Paul says that success as the head of a household is also a criterion for holding church office. All branches of the Christian church have violated this rule for many centuries.

E. Universal Denial by the Church

The church after the fourth century allowed celibate monastic orders. Celibate monks were ordained. In both East and West, this tradition has prevailed. Eastern Orthodoxy closed the office of bishop to married men in the sixth century. Widowers who had been married only once were eligible. The rule still holds. The on-line article on "Eastern Orthodoxy" in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* summarizes the restrictions.

> The lower orders of the clergy—i.e., priests and deacons—are generally married men. The present canonical legislation allows the ordination of married men to the diaconate and the priesthood, provided that they were married only once and that their wives are neither widows nor divorcees. These stipulations reflect the general principle of absolute monogamy, which the Eastern Church considered as a Christian norm to which candi-

> dates for the priesthood are to comply strictly. Deacons and priests cannot marry after their ordination.
>
> Bishops, however, are selected from among the unmarried clergy or widowed priests. The rule defining the requirement for an unmarried episcopate was issued at a time (6th century) when monks represented the elite of the clergy. The contemporary decrease in the number of monks in the Orthodox Church has created a serious problem in some territorial churches, in that new candidates for the episcopacy are difficult to find.

Roman Catholicism closed the entire priesthood to married men no later than the twelfth century. In 1022, Benedict VIII banned marriages for existing priests. This tradition goes back to the early fourth century: the Council of Elvira in Spain, which preceded Nicea. By the end of the fourth century, hierarchical pressure was put on all married priests and deacons to live apart from their wives.

Among Protestant denominations, marriage has been optional for ordination, although Luther strongly recommended marriage for all ministers. Calvinistic Protestantism very early substituted formal education for the marriage vow as the preferred screening device for ministers. A college degree has been required for ministerial ordination—the authority to dispense the sacraments—for hundreds of years. A college degree required a working knowledge of Latin until well into the nineteenth century. To this was added Greek and Hebrew in college. With the invention of the theological seminary in 1808,[18] a seminary degree became increasingly common as a screening device, and universal by the late nineteenth century. It was only in 1911 that the Northern Presbyterian Church in the United States officially eliminated a reading knowledge of Latin as a formal requirement for ministers.[19] Few Presbyterian seminarians had understood Latin since the 1860s,[20] but the requirement was so respected that the denomination could not bring itself for half a century to admit the obvious.

The Methodists and the Baptists adopted circuit riding for their ministers in frontier regions of the United States. This was the primary reason for their success in evangelizing the western United States, 1801–1860. There were fewer than 500 Baptist congregations and vir-

18. Andover Seminary, a Calvinistic Congregational institution.

19. *Minutes of the General Assembly*, 1911, pp. 197–98.

20. Charles Hodge decided to allow the publication of his famous *Systematic Theology* (1871–73) because he knew that students in each seminary year were selling hand-written copies of his lecture notes to students in the year behind theirs. His lectures were based on the early seventeenth-century Latin work of Francis Turretin, which few American students could read in 1860. Turretin was not translated into English until the 1990s.

tually no Methodist congregations in the United States in 1780. There were fewer than 500 Presbyterian congregations. By 1860, there were about 20,000 Methodist congregations and 12,000 Baptist congregations. There were 6,400 Presbyterian congregations.[21] Frontier circuit riders were not required to attend college or seminary. They were paid very little. In 1834, the official salary for a Methodist circuit rider was $100 a year, but most of them had difficulty collecting the money. Marriage was strongly discouraged because the minister was also supposed to be paid an extra $100 for his wife. This payment was even more difficult to collect. Baptists were usually guaranteed nothing; they got paid only what they could collect from individual congregations. Most of them had to take full-time jobs when they became settled pastors. They were paid $60 to $100 a year. In contrast, the Calvinistic denominations imposed strict educational requirements for ordination as ministers. These men rarely left the Eastern seaboard, where salaries were commensurate with their high (and costly) educational attainment. Presbyterians and Congregationalists were paid $400 to $1,000 a year in small cities, and $1,000 to $3,000 a year in large cities.[22] Methodist and Baptist ministers were price-competitive because they had little formal education and no wives.

Had the church consistently honored I Timothy 3, it would be a very different organization today.

F. Monogamy vs. Crime

George Gilder for a brief period was one of America's most economically successful journalists. In 2001, he purchased the conservative magazine, *The American Spectator*, which had been publishing for over three decades.[23] He was the editor-publisher of an expensive and widely read financial newsletter on innovative communications technology.[24] Several of his books became best-sellers, beginning with *Wealth and Poverty* in 1981. He launched his career in 1973 with an essay in *Harper's*, "The Suicide of the Sexes."

21. Edwin Scott Gaustad, *Historical Atlas of Religion in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 43, Figure 32.

22. Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776–1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992), pp. 81–82.

23. I wrote for it in the early 1970s, when it was called *The Alternative*.

24. Bad advice regarding a stock called Global Crossing, which went bankrupt in 2002, cost Gilder his reputation and his fortune. He wrote in June, 2002, that he was facing bankruptcy.

That essay led to his first book, *Sexual Suicide* (1973). A revised version was titled *Naked Nomads* (1974). Still another revised edition was titled *Men and Marriage* (1986). The common theme in all three versions is that the sexes are fundamentally different. Men are inherently aggressive; women are inherently home-builders. Men want to possess women for sexual reasons. Women domesticate men by giving men what they are after, but only on terms established by women—and, he might have added, their fathers. A society that does not reinforce this domestication of men through law and custom is committing suicide.

In the Introduction to *Men and Marriage*, he says that he was unable to find a mainstream publisher for the book, despite the financial success of *Wealth and Poverty*. He had been approached by several major publishers to produce a manuscript, but all of them returned this one. In every case, he was led to believe, a feminist editor had vetoed publication.[25] Finally, it was published by an obscure publisher in an obscure town in Louisiana, a state not known for book publishing.

Gilder's book is a defense of heterosexual monogamy, which he said is a moral norm for society.[26] In the final third of the twentieth century, American society widely accepted a form of sexual liberalism that undermined this norm. He said that the breakdown of marriage had become much worse in the decade separating the first edition and the third. In retrospect, it is clear that the decline has continued.

Gilder's central argument is that unmarried young men are the primary source of social barbarism. Barbarians do not build civilizations; they undermine them. Unmarried young men are society's largest pool of dysfunctional people. "If the truth be known, all too many of them are entirely unsuited for civilized life. Every society must figure out ways to bring them into the disciplines and duties of citizenship."[27] He titles this chapter, "Taming the Barbarians." At the age when most men marry, they are in rebellion against parents, teachers, and the church. They are at the bottom of their earning capacity. Only one institutional restraint consistently brings them into line: marriage. Society has a constitution that demands that they marry in order to relieve their passion. "It is the sexual constitution, not the legal one, that is decisive in subduing the aggressions of young men."[28]

25. George Gilder, *Men and Marriage* (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican, 1986), p. viii.
26. Ibid., p. viii–ix.
27. *Ibid*., p. 39.
28. *Idem*.

Gilder offered statistics on the disproportionate rates of crime, poor health, and death that single, never-married men suffer. At the time when Gilder wrote this book, single men constituted 13% of the American population. They also constituted 40% of the criminals. They committed about 90% of violent crimes.[29] Divorced men are also high-risk members of society compared to divorced women. In the age group 35–64, they have over three times the death rate of divorced women in the same age range.[30]

Then he presented other statistics on remarriage. Over age 40, most divorced women do not remarry. Divorced men remarry within three years. They marry women who are on average 30 years old.[31] When a divorced man marries a younger woman, he removes her from the pool of eligible women. This leaves a younger unmarried man without a potential wife. A younger man will not marry a woman who is significantly older than he is, i.e., above the normal child-bearing years.

If the younger woman is also divorced, the problem is pushed down another notch in age distribution. Her divorced husband will marry a younger woman. At some point, the number of women eligible for marriage to the would-be barbarians will be reduced. Gilder concluded:

> The only undeniable winners in the sexual revolution are powerful men. Under a regime of sexual liberation, some men can fulfill the paramount dream of most men everywhere: they can have the nubile years of more than one young woman. Whether a man takes these young women one at a time, staying married and having mistresses—or whether he marries two or more young women in succession, or whether he merely lives with young women without marriage—makes little difference to the social consequences. The man is no less a polygamist—or more specifically a polygynist —than if he had maintained a harem.[32]

The social consequences of divorce are overwhelmingly negative, Gilder said. Divorced wives are left to live out their lives without husbands. Younger men do not find wives, and so commit more crime, earn lower incomes, and die younger. Children grow up in homes headed by single women or shared by a stepparent.

In *Wealth and Poverty*, Gilder discussed marriage and wealth. "The

29. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
32. *Idem.*

only dependable route from poverty is always work, family, and faith."[33] The statistics indicate that married men work 50% more than bachelors of comparable age, education, and skills.[34] Every society that expects to prosper must find ways to persuade young men to marry and stay married. "If work effort is the first principle of overcoming poverty, marriage is the prime source of upwardly mobile work."[35]

Gilder minced no words in his defence of monogamy. Without monogamy, the social order will not hold.

> Monogamy is central to any democratic social contract, designed to prevent a breakdown of society into "war of every man against every other man." In order to preserve order, a man may relinquish liberty, property, and power to the state. But if he has to give up his wife to his boss—or hers—he is unmanned. A society of open sexual competition, in which the rich and powerful—or the sexually attractive—can command large numbers of women, is a society with the most intolerable hierarchy of all.
>
> Monogamy is egalitarian in the realm of love. It is a mode of rationing. It means—to put it crudely—one to a customer. Competition is intense enough even so, because of the sexual inequality of human beings. But under a regime of monogamy there are limits.[36]

Women become subordinate to men in marriage. Men become subordinate to society in marriage. The division of labor increases in the family and also in society. Capital increases, as does output. This is *dominion through subordination*.

Under the New Covenant, a nation's supply of eligible single women cannot lawfully be increased by the purchase of resident alien women. Therefore, the social evils of polygamy threaten every New Covenant social order. Biblical law does not subsidize crime and anti-social behavior. In a society that prohibits the enslavement for foreign women, polygamy increases crime and anti-social behavior. This means that the principle of "one husband, one wife" is the judicial standard for marriage under a Christian civil order. The biblical legal principle of the rule of law has always applied to civil government. "One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you" (Ex. 12:49).[37] The standard that governs Christian marriages must govern all marriages.

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33. Gilder, *Wealth and Poverty* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), p. 68.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
36. Gilder, *Men and Marriage*, p. 58.
37. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 14.

G. Excess Single Women in Western Churches

Polygamy as the New Testament's ideal standard for marriage has occasionally been defended by anti-establishment religious groups as a supposed means of strengthening the family—always the "patriarchal family." This is a strange argument. Polygamy did not strengthen any family in the Old Testament. It surely does not strengthen families that it keeps from being formed by reducing the pool of eligible women for marriage. But what about the disparity between the number of male and female members in the Western Church? Would polygamy solve this problem?

It is not widely recognized that Western Christianity for many centuries has been afflicted by an imbalance of men and women church members. This may not be the case with Greek Orthodoxy, where equality seems to prevail,[38] but it has been the case with all other major denominations.[39] Women outnumber men, sometimes by wide margins. In African-American congregations in the United States, in Latin American and Italian Roman Catholic churches, and in white Pentecostal churches, women outnumber men by two-to-one or more. If Paul's rule against marriages between Christians and non-Christians were honored by unmarried women in these groups, the formation of families would decrease.

Assume that unmarried women in the churches turned down all offers of marriage by non-Christians. Non-Christian males could not marry Christian women, who would refuse their offers. Meanwhile, many single Christian women would find no husbands. Unless the churches could find a solution to the problem of gender disparity, the widespread presence of churches in any society would produce increased crime, other things being equal. There would be too many unmarried young men.

The practical solution to this Western social problem has been simple: most Christian women marry covenant-breakers when asked, if no one else has asked or is likely to ask. This practice has continued for centuries. Adult sons of these religiously mixed marriages more often refuse to join the church than adult daughters. They imitate their fathers. Daughters imitate their mothers. They join the church and then marry non-members, just as their mothers did. In a book on this continuing disparity of membership, the author did not mention

38. Leon J. Podles, *The Church Impotent: The Feminization of Christianity* (Dallas, Texas: Spence, 1999), pp. xii–xiii, 11.

39. *Ibid.*, ch. 1.

this imitation phenomenon as the reason why this disparity continues, generation after generation. He offered no explanation for the disparity, which appears in all branches of the Western church, nor does he explain why the problem does not afflict Eastern Orthodoxy. He recognized that sons reject their mothers as role models, imitating their fathers,[40] but he did not discuss the obvious: their mothers have broken God's law by marrying non-Christian men, and their daughters follow their example. Establishing a family covenant becomes more important to unmarried Christian women than maintaining the church covenant. Romance defeats confession.

Would polygamy in the churches reduce this problem? I have twice been asked this question by a prominent African-American pastor, whose congregation is filled with unmarried women who cannot find husbands. Polygamy might solve the problem for some of these woman, but it would raise all of the other problems by setting a legal precedent which, if authorized by civil law and imitated by the general culture, would produce increased social disorder. Polygamy would not solve the underlying problem, namely, an excess of women in the churches. Because this problem is rarely discussed in public, churches have done nothing to solve it for several hundred years.

The negative aspects of not being married seem very great to eligible unmarried women. When asked by covenant-breakers to marry, they do not look into the future and acknowledge that their sons will go to hell if they imitate their fathers, which most of them will. Meanwhile, their parents and their churches offer no serious negative sanctions for this act of covenant-breaking. The lure of the benefits of marriage is not offset in their minds by the threat of immediate negative ecclesiastical and family sanctions or by long-term negative sanctions: the eternal fate of their sons and the temporal miseries of sharing a life with covenant-breakers. So, they marry these men. The disparity of church membership continues. To put it somewhat graphically, theology and sanctionless ecclesiology are no match for sexual passion during women's child-bearing years. As a result, Satan harvests the souls of many sons of Christian mothers, century after century. The institutional problem is weak ecclesiology, not monogamy. This problem can be solved only by the willingness of churches and families to impose the sanctions of excommunication and disinheritance, respectively, on women who marry covenant-breakers.

For over two millennia, Jews retained their separate existence as

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 38–43.

a people that dwelt in many different foreign cultures. They accomplished this remarkable historical feat by imposing extreme negative sanctions on sons who converted to Christianity. These departed sons were treated as if they had died. There were formal burial services for them. Biological grandparents never enjoyed the presence of their grandchildren. This was a heavy price to pay for all individuals concerned, but it made possible the survival of the Jews. Theological liberalism has undermined this commitment in Reform Judaism. Liberal Judaism is dying out as a result. Within a century, it will be reduced to invisibility except in the State of Israel because of the high rate intermarriage and the fact that the children of Jewish-gentile marriages are not usually raised as Jews.[41] Aging liberal Jews delight in their gentile grandchildren, but they are committing suicide as a people. Negative sanctions are inescapable: either on sons who leave the faith or on the faith itself.

Conclusion

The monogamy of Jesus Christ is the main reason why the New Testament's ideal for marriage is monogamy. The institutional church, as the only bride of Christ, must be ruled by men who imitate Christ. They must have only one wife.

Paul in this passage and in others restricts church offices to men who are married to one wife, or who have been married to one wife at some point in their lives, i.e., widowers or men who lawfully divorced faithless wives. He also identifies success in managing a household as a criterion for holding church office. This makes a monogamous marriage a preliminary screening device for exercising formal authority in a church.

The Judaizers were Paul's immediate targets of this law. Greeks and Romans were monogamous. The Old Covenant allowed polygamy. Paul here sides with the gentiles against the Jews. The gentiles, by establishing monogamy as the legal standard, had come closer to God's view of what marriage should be.

Monogamy reduces crime. It increases married men's economic output, thereby increasing wealth. Biology produces approximately equal numbers of men and women. Polygamy, whether simultaneous or sequential, reduces the number of women who are available for

41. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), Appendix D: "The Demographics of American Judaism."

single young men to marry. The presence of young men who have no hope of marriage is a social and economic liability.

Paul proclaimed a criterion for ecclesiastical ordination that he did not meet. He was not married. He was never ordained by the church. He was ordained directly by God. For those men, unlike himself, who are not ordained directly by God, marriage and children are a dual requirement for ordination. With the final termination of the Old Covenant in A.D. 70, God ceased to ordain apostles, either directly (e.g., Paul) or ecclesiastically (e.g., Matthias). No one after A.D. 70 has been directly ordained by God. Ordination is strictly ecclesiastical.

4

ECONOMICS AND ORDINATION

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity.

I TIMOTHY 3:2–4

Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre.

I TIMOTHY 3:8

The theocentric issue in this passage is the ecclesiastical hierarchy under God.[1] There is a required screening process before a man can lawfully be ordained to represent God ecclesiastically.

A. Bishops and Elders

The Greek word for "bishop" is related to the Greek word for "visitation."[2] Grammatically speaking, a bishop is a church officer who makes visits. The Bible never says who is to be visited by a bishop. It also says nothing about what his jurisdiction is.

1. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 2. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, [1980] 2010), ch. 2.

2. "And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (Luke 19:44). "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (I Peter 2:12).

1. The Visitor

Church tradition has defined a bishop as a church official who rules over priests. Who are these priests? There is no New Testament office that involves offering sacrifices to God. The Old Covenant priesthood was annulled by Christ's final sacrifice (Heb. 7–9). But church tradition has long equated a priest with a church officer who is uniquely authorized to administer the sacraments. A bishop is said to ordain men to the priesthood, by which is meant the sacrament-administering ministry.

A bishop also is said to operate within a fixed geographical area, with no direct jurisdiction outside this area. In his legal capacity as a member of a college of bishops, he represents ministers and lay members of the denomination who reside inside his jurisdiction. None of this is found in the New Testament, but most of it has a long tradition that stretches back to the second century.

The presumption of the passage is that the investiture of the authority to conduct some sort of formal visitations in the name of the church must be restricted to men who have previously demonstrated specific leadership abilities. These abilities are ethical, marital, and economic. They are in no way related to formal education. The attempt to define "bishop" or an equivalent office in terms of formal education is a matter of tradition, though a much shorter tradition than the one which offers a geographical definition of the office.

There is a church officer mentioned by Paul in verse 17 of this epistle and also in Titus 1:5, *presbuteros*, meaning "elder." Paul mentions this office in the midst of two passages that list criteria for holding office. In both passages, he also refers to the office of bishop. It is not clear from either context that these two offices are different, even though the names are different. This has led to a division ecclesiastically between episcopacy or prelacy on the one hand, and Presbyterianism on the other. Presbyterianism has no bishops. Episcopacy[3] and prelacy[4] have bishops and elders, although both refuse to call elders "elders." They call them priests or ministers or rectors or pastors—anything but elders.

If a bishop visits, then who is supposed to get visited? Ever since

3. Episcopacy differs from prelacy in that it entrusts a veto power over the bishops by a body representing laymen. An example is the structure of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

4. A hierarchical government of church offices that removes the clergy from any judicial veto by representatives of the laity.

the Protestant Reformation, Protestant churches have been divided over the answer. Churches in the tradition of either prelacy or episcopacy say that a bishop visits local churches within his geographical district or diocese. He serves both as a counsellor and an agent of discipline for local pastors. He also performs the rite of confirmation, through which young adults are brought into the church as full members.

2. Presbyters

In contrast to this high-church tradition, Presbyterians say that the Greek word for "bishop" has the same meaning as the Greek word for "presbyter," meaning elder. Presbyterians distinguish among elders, however. One variety—the teaching elder—is marked by church membership in a regional presbytery, not in a local congregation. He alone possesses lawful authority to preach regularly in a local congregation's formal worship service and to administer the sacraments. Visitation is not a formal aspect of his office. That is to say, there is nothing in Presbyterian documents or tradition that authorizes anyone to bring formal charges against a teaching elder because he has failed to make visits of some kind. There may be a family visitation program in a local congregation, but it is not mandatory. The other kind of elders—ruling elders who belong to a local congregation—traditionally are supposed to participate in any family-visitation program. The implementation of such a program can be lawfully skipped by a local congregation. The Book of Church order does not mandate family visitation.[5] So, for Presbyterians, "bishop" is grammatically defined as "elder," despite the fact that "elder" has no connotation of visitation. Therefore, Presbyterian teaching elders do not have visitation in their formal job description.[6] The two-fold exegetical problem for Presbyterians is this: a judicial identity is asserted where none exists grammatically (bishop = elder), and a judicial distinction is asserted where none exists grammatically (teaching elder vs. ruling elder).

3. Multiple Offices

It does not logically follow that the two offices, bishop and elder, are in fact the same office just because the criteria for the offices are similar, though not identical. The diaconate is a subordinate office,

5. There is a reference to visitation of the sick. The Book of Church Order of the Reformed Church in America does mention family visitation: Chapter I, Section 8.

6. Again, the exception is the Reformed Church in America.

yet its requirements are similar, though not identical. It could be—but is not stated in any text—that the eldership is a lower office that has the same criteria that govern the screening of bishops.

In his epistle to Titus, Paul referred to the criteria for elders (plural): blameless, monogamous, having obedient children. He then justified this list in terms of what is required of a bishop (singular).

> For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain **elders** in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a **bishop** must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers (Titus 1:5–9).

Paul's abrupt transition from a discussion of the criteria for elders to a discussion of the criteria for a bishop is not explained in the text. Is it a transition at all? Presbyterians say it isn't; it is the same office: elder. Paul mentions blamelessness as a requirement of elders and bishops, i.e., he mentions it twice. Did he do this for emphasis regarding the importance of this characteristic for someone seeking the same office, which for some unstated reason has two names, or was it because there are two offices with the same criteria? Protestant churches have never come to any agreement on the answer.

"Blameless" appears once in the Timothy passage and twice in the Titus passage. To be ordained, a candidate must have conducted his public affairs in such a way that he has gained people's trust. This means that he must possess a good reputation. The Greek word for "blameless" has the sense of "not being spoken against." Blame means the opposite. "But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against" (Acts 28:22). The list of criteria in I Timothy 3 presents *representative aspects of good conduct that constitute a blameless life*. Men whose lives are marked by these characteristics are not spoken against.

Next, Paul introduces an economic criterion: hospitality.

B. Hospitality

Hospitality costs money. To care for others or to entertain others is an expense. A bishop is supposed to display a willingness to spend money on others.

The Greek word translated here as "hospitality," *philoxenos*, is a combination of two Greek words, *philos* (love) and *xenos* (stranger). The hospitable man is someone who frequently invites strangers into his home. He entertains them or gives them shelter. There is an element of celebration involved in hospitality, or, if not celebration, then at least personal sacrifice. This is a drain on family resources on behalf of others. The bishop is supposed to place service to strangers above the maximization of his family's net worth.

Because of this requirement, a candidate for bishop has to be a person with enough wealth to be hospitable. He must not be poverty-stricken. This means that he must have experienced a degree of economic success that some members of the congregation have not experienced. *A bishop is set apart ecclesiastically by his money and by the use of his money*. But he is not to be granted this office in exchange for a promise to promote even more hospitality at his own expense on behalf of the church. This would amount to buying the office: the sin known as Simony.[7] Church salaries paid to bishops should be used in part to fund hospitality.

The candidate is required to have shown hospitality in the past. His reputation for having opened his home to strangers must be established before he attains high office. Patterns of behavior must be established early. This implies that the moral character of those eligible for the office of bishop must be established early.

Hospitality is to serve as an ideal for church members generally. It is not that hospitality is a unique function of the office of bishop.

C. "Not Greedy of Filthy Lucre"

The Greek word for "money" is not the same as the Greek word found here. The Greek word here has the sense of not seeking sordid gain: *aphilarguros*. Literally, it means "no love of silver." This word is the negative of *philarguros*, which appears only twice in the New Testament. "And the Pharisees also, who were **covetous**, heard all these

7. A word derived from Simon the sorcerer, who asked Peter to sell him the power of ordination. "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God" (Acts 8:18–21). Gary North, *Sacrifice and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Acts*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 6.

things: and they derided him" (Luke 16:14). "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, **covetous**, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy" (II Tim. 3:2). The King James translators used "not filthy lucre" in several passages to translate *aphilarguros*. For example, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" (I Peter 5:2).

The sense of *philarguros* is the desire to accumulate wealth for the sake of establishing one's autonomy. This has to do with self-love. Self-love was regarded by Jesus and Paul as a sin. The lover of money is in fact a lover of himself. Verse 3 speaks of both greed[8] and covetousness. "Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous." Verse 8 also speaks of greed. "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre." In both of these references to greed, the translators added "filthy." It is not in the Greek text.

Paul says that a bishop should be screened in terms of his attitude toward wealth. If a candidate has accumulated wealth for the purpose of a vain display, he must not be ordained. The early twentieth-century anti-capitalistic economist Thorstein Veblen coined a phrase, "conspicuous consumption." He regarded this as a great evil. It is not a great evil, but it is sufficiently evil to serve as a test of a man's character—also, a woman's. "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (I Tim. 2:9–10).[9] *Conspicuous consumption is considered a moral liability by the New Testament*. So is the amassing of less visible forms of wealth as a means of gaining security. Later in this epistle, Paul refers to the uncertainty of riches (6:17).[10] He who trusts in his wealth has misunderstood the

8. Textus Receptus. The NU (Egyptian) text omits this.

9. Peter agreed: "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement" (I Peter 3:1–6).

10. Chapter 11.

source of security in this life. Wealth is to be a Christian's means of charity, hospitality, and sufficient leisure to free him for non-profit service.

The criteria for screening candidates for the diaconate are quite similar to the criteria for bishops. The main economic difference relates to hospitality. This is not a criterion for deacons. The absence of greed is. The deacon is not to be greedy for money (v. 8).

Why is a candidate for deacon not required to be hospitable? This difference is related to the functions of the two offices. A deacon uses the church's wealth to provide charity to the poor (Acts 6:1–3).[11] He is an assistant to the bishop or elders. The bishop, in contrast, is supposed to have developed the habit of hospitality with his own money. He possesses greater judicial authority than a deacon. A selfless habit of hospitality identifies him as a servant. This character trait is crucial to the biblical concept of rulership. "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20:25–27).[12]

There are other criteria for deacons, but they are not economic in nature.

Conclusion

Paul in this section of the epistle sets forth criteria that are to govern ecclesiastical ordination. These criteria are ethical, economic, and marital.

With regard to a candidate's attitude toward wealth, he must not put his trust in money. He is not to seek money as a means of gaining security. Wealth is not for display. It is for hospitality. Personal displays of great wealth exclude men from the office of bishop and deacon.

Formal education is not mentioned as a requirement for church office in any New Testament passage. Yet ever since the high Middle Ages, the church has sought to replace the requirement of marriage with the requirement of formal education as the supreme criterion for ecclesiastical ordination. Paul was clear about what is required. The

11. North, *Sacrifice and Dominion*, ch. 5.

12. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 41.

church has been adamant: Paul was wrong. What the church does testifies to what it really believes, not what it officially maintains regarding the authority of the Bible. The church, on this point, has rejected the Bible in preference for university training. It has officially substituted the writing of term papers in place of ruling one's household well.

5

THE ALIEN SPIRIT OF PROHIBITION

> *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.*
>
> I TIMOTHY 4:1–6

The theocentric focus of this law is God as the source of all good gifts. The judicial issue is boundaries. Evildoers will come and announce boundaries around gifts from God. Boundaries are point three of the biblical covenant.[1] A gift is sanctified, meaning *set apart*, by prayer.

A. The Goodness of the Creation

Paul in this epistle is dealing with the influence of Judaizers. These infiltrators into the church were setting forth false doctrines. Paul instructs Timothy in ways for the local congregation to deal judicially with this sect and other theological evils.

Paul says here that Timothy is seeing the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Holy Spirit that in the latter times, teachers of errors will appear. The Greek phrase, "the latter times," appears nowhere else in

1. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 3. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, [1980] 2010), ch. 3.

the New Testament. The Greek word for "latter" is sometimes translated as "last." In the context of this epistle, the meaning is "last." Paul was living in the last days. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews announced the same thing. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1–2). These were the last days of Old Covenant Israel.

Paul's language is exceedingly harsh. He refers the heresy-preachers as being subject to "seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." *There is no spirit of reconciliation here*. This is not irenic language: "Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." The imagery of a seared conscience, as meat is seared to keep it from dripping, is powerful. It conveys the idea of something impervious to anything from the outside—in this case, God's law.

What is their error? "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats." These people were recommending celibacy and vegetarianism. Celibacy is geared for an elite: an elite that must recruit, for it does not reproduce. No society could adopt such a view and survive. Either its birth rate would fall to zero (true celibacy) or its bastardy rate would climb to 100% (destruction of marriage). In either case, the society would perish.

Vegetarianism's error is to imply that animals were not made by God for man's enjoyment, including culinary enjoyment. The vegetarian places meat within a boundary that says: "Unfit for Human Consumption." This boundary, Paul says, is man's doing, not God's. Not only is meat fit for human consumption in the sense of being suitable for man, it is fit in the sense of being designed for man. Paul says, "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." The supreme purpose of edible animals is to be killed and consumed by man. The model is God Himself, who delights in the odor of burning flesh.

> Thou shalt also take one ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. And thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take his blood, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar. And thou shalt cut the ram in pieces, and wash the inwards of him, and his legs, and put them unto his pieces, and unto his head. And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt offering unto the Lord: it is a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the Lord (Ex. 29:15–18).

B. A Break With the Mosaic Covenant

The Mosaic law's prohibitions against certain meats were not part of the pre-Mosaic era. The dietary laws were not part of any creation mandate. The Mosaic law's meat restrictions were a discontinuity in God's dealings with covenant-keeping men.

There were no Mosaic restrictions on vegetables. Vegetables were all considered ritually clean. All unclean foods were animals. These could not lawfully be eaten. The clean animals could be eaten. Meat was obligatory at Passover.

Paul's identification of these false teachers as vegetarians indicates that Paul's targets in this passage were not Judaizers, who were not vegetarians. What about the prohibition against marriage? The Jewish sect known as the Essenes was separatist. According to Josephus, one branch was celibate.[2] Another branch was not.[3] This was a small sect. They had little contact with other Jews. It seems highly unlikely that Essenes, who were few in number and who had separated themselves from the surrounding Jewish culture, were evangelizing gentile churches in Asia. It is unlikely that they had imitators among Jews in a Greek congregation.

There seems to have been no Jewish sect that was vegetarian. So, the presumption has to be that the group which Paul is speaking about here must have been a gentile ascetic group inside the church. The main source of vegetarianism in Greek religion was the cult of Orpheus. This group believed in reincarnation, and therefore members avoided meat.[4] It is unlikely that any former adherent of this cult would seek to persuade members of the church at Ephesus of this theology. Also, this cult was ancient in Plato's day.[5] So, this could hardly be a fulfillment of the Spirit's prophecy regarding the latter days, which had to do with those who would depart from the faith, not invaders who had brought with them new doctrines. "Some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." My conclusion is that this was a home-grown doctrine. It came from those who had been orthodox, but who had come up with new ideas.

Paul says that vegetarianism as a religious obligation is a doctrine of demons. There is no trace of humility or forbearance here. Meat is

2. Josephus, *War of the Jews*, II:2.

3. *Ibid.*, II:8.

4. W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Boston: Beacon Press, [1955] 1961), pp. 320–21.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 320.

something that "God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

This leads Paul to make another observation: the goodness of the creation. "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." Here, Paul breaks with the Mosaic law, which identified certain meats as unclean. In the post-resurrection world, this restriction has been annulled. To argue otherwise, Paul says, is to adopt a doctrine of demons.

This does not mean that certain animals are not poisonous to men. The fugu fish is poisonous if not prepared correctly.[6] What Paul is rejecting is any suggestion that meats are ritually impure and therefore must be avoided. God created them good. The Mosaic restriction was clearly temporary. Any meat that is served by a host should be eaten by the recipient. If it will not kill you biologically, it will not kill you spiritually.

C. Needless Prohibitions

Paul says that religious leaders are lying to the flock. These leaders are importing an alien philosophy into the church. This must cease. Paul is not saying that refraining from marriage for the sake of a call from God is wrong. He is not saying that certain meats should not be avoided by people who are allergic to them. Instead, he is rejecting any suggestion that a universal prohibition on marriage is required, or that a universal prohibition on eating meat—or any species of meat—is legitimate.

The issue is theological. Paul tells Timothy to guard the flock against false ideas. These ideas are literally satanic: doctrines of demons. Those who promote them seek to create a works religion that promises to ingratiate man with God by means of man-made self-sacrifice. This not only does not ingratiate man with God, it angers God. Man is placing boundaries around God's good gifts in the name of pleasing God. This is works religion.

These prohibitions are needless. They would commit the church to a program of expansion that would not rely on children who are born into covenant-keeping families: no marriages. These prohibitions would cut off church members from the joy of eating meat. They would create a mentality of personal sanctification through avoid-

6. Nicholas D. Kristof, "Deflating a Poisonous Pufferfish Legend," *New York Times* (June 10, 1996).

ing God's gifts. This was a theology of a greater blessing, a blessing greater than the blessings of marriage, children, grandchildren, and meat. It was of necessity *a theology of an elite*: people who are beyond the normal and valid desires of the flesh. It was a call to escape from history.

The New Testament calls men out of the realm of death into the realm of life (John 3:36). This is not a call out of history, but rather a call into the kingdom of God, whose representatives are to disciple the nations in history (Matt. 28:19).[7]

Paul writes: "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." Prayer sanctifies—sets apart—the common things of life. This indicates that saying grace before meals is both valid and beneficial. It is an act of thanksgiving. Prayer sanctifies food, including meat. There should be no fear regarding meat served by someone else. Do not refuse it, Paul tells Timothy.

This teaching opens the world to dominion by covenant. The entire creation is suitable for reclamation from Satan's kingdom because everything was originally designed by God to be good. The creation is eligible for restoration, i.e., sanctification by God through the activities of His covenant people. This is a theology of paradise restored.[8]

Conclusion

This passage opposes celibacy and religious vegetarianism as universal ideals within the church. It challenges both views as satanic doctrines. It makes it clear that sanctification is not a call to deny the world's pleasures, as long as these pleasures are bounded by covenant law. Marriage is not prohibited. Neither is meat.

This is a call to reclamation-restoration-reconstruction. God's good creation can be restored from sin. It will be restored at the final judgment, but, in the meantime, God's people are to treat the creation as good, not as a threat to their spiritual lives. The threat to men's spirits is sin, not the creation. The Fall of man was ethical, not metaphysical. So is the restoration of man and his environment.

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7. Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *The Greatness of the Great Commission: The Christian Enterprise in a Fallen World* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990).

8. David Chilton, *Paradise Restored: A Biblical Theology of Dominion* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1985).

6

COMMON GRACE

For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

I TIMOTHY 4:10

The theocentric principle here is God's grace which is a gift unearned by the recipient. This is sanctions: point four of the biblical covenant.[1]

A. The Savior of All Men

This verse is an enigma for those who reject universalism. In what way is God the savior of all men if billions of people are condemned to hell and then the lake of fire by the same God who supposedly saves them?

Calvin's said that the phrase, "Savior of all men," refers to God's *kindness* to all men.[2] There is no doubt that it has to mean this, but the theological question is this: In what way, and on what legal basis, does God show kindness to the unregenerate? If He saves all men, then why do they perish? If He saves all men, then how can some be saved when they have never heard to gospel of salvation by grace through faith in the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ at Calvary? The same question applies to I John 4:14: "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."

1. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 4. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, 2010), ch. 4.

2. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Epistle to Timothy* (1556), in *Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1981), p. 112.

The solution to this theological dilemma is the Greek word translated "specially." The word is *malista*. It means in this and other contexts, "particularly." It is used within the context of a phenomenon that applies to a general category of individuals. The word identifies a subcategory to which the general phenomenon applies in to a heightened degree.

> As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, **especially** unto them who are of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10).

> All the saints salute you, **chiefly** they that are of Caesar's household (Phil. 4:22).

> But if any provide not for his own, and **specially** for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel (I Tim. 5:8).

> Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, **especially** they who labour in the word and doctrine (I Tim. 5:17).

So, there is a general phenomenon, salvation. Salvation applies in a heightened degree to people who believe in Jesus as savior. What can be said of salvation that applies to those who do not believe?

The Greek word for "savior" is *soter*. It comes from the root word, *sozo*. In many cases, it refers to redemption. "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). But there are several instances where it cannot mean this. The Jews told Christ on the cross: "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross" (Matt. 27:40). Again, "The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him" (Matt. 27:49). In a broad context, the Greek word refers to wholeness in the sense of *restoration to health*.

> For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be **whole** (Matt. 9:21).

> And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be **healed**; and she shall live (Mark 5:23).

> And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee **whole**. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way (Mark 10:52).

> They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was **healed** (Luke 8:36).

> Notwithstanding she shall be **saved** in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety (I Tim. 2:15).

In what way has God healed all men? In the sense of delivering them for a time from Adam's curse: death. This *deliverance from death* comes in a special way to covenant-keepers: deliverance from the second death, the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14).

So, Christ serves as a deliverer of all men in history, but also as a deliverer of His people in eternity. This deliverance takes place in history. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). There is a general deliverance, *temporal existence*, which fallen man does not deserve. Covenant-breakers are recipients of *undeserved gifts* from God. They are beneficiaries of common grace.[3]

It is on the judicial basis of Christ's death and resurrection that God extends undeserved gifts to covenant-breakers. This is the basis of common grace. The biblical doctrine of common grace does not imply God's favor to covenant-breakers, any more than His grant of time and power to Satan implies His favor.

There has been great confusion regarding the doctrine of common grace. It has been improperly used to justify versions of natural law theory. The doctrine can legitimately be used—indeed, *must* be used—to explain how the division of labor benefits both parties to a voluntary exchange, even though the exchange is made between a covenant-keeper and a covenant-breaker. Covenant-keepers benefit from the skills of covenant-breakers, and vice-versa.

B. The Division of Labor

God made the dominion covenant with all mankind (Gen. 1:26–28).[4] Men were made by God to subdue the earth. This impulse to extend man's dominion is inherent in men's nature. What divides men is confession. There is division among men in terms of this question: *On whose behalf does a man extend his dominion*?

A man's ability to extend his area of responsibility in history is a gift of God that is unmerited by anything done by the recipient. It is a common gift because it is a gift to all mankind. But there is a law

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3. Gary North, *Dominion and Common Grace: The Biblical Basis of Progress* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987).

4. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), chaps. 3, 4.

attached to this gift: any increase in a man's wealth is accompanied by an increase in his responsibility (Luke 12:47–48).[5] Grace precedes law, but law always follows.

Because God's command to exercise dominion in history was given to all men, the division of labor becomes possible. A man can therefore cooperate with other men in joint ventures. All of them can legitimately expect to benefit from this voluntary cooperation. There is a common humanity based on God's creation of man in His image.

There need not be a common confession in order for the participants to benefit from their cooperation. There are many areas of life in which joint ventures are possible and desirable. On the basis of contract, people can create long-term ventures. A contract is not a covenant. A covenant is established by mutual oath between men under God. These covenants are limited to three areas: church government, civil government, and family government.

Conclusion

Common grace is the theological foundation of the division of labor in a fallen world. Participants in a voluntary exchange benefit, despite their rival covenantal confessions. Any theologian who denies the existence of common grace would have a difficult time explaining how covenant-breakers are not recipients of God's unmerited gifts. Covenant-breakers are clearly the beneficiaries of increased joint productivity and therefore increased wealth. How can this be explained theologically apart from the doctrine of common grace?

5. Gary North, *Treasure and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Luke*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 28.

7

THE SUPPORT OF WIDOWS

Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews [grandchildren], let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

I TIMOTHY 5:3–4

The theocentric focus of this law is God's office as Father, the faithful head of a household. This law is an application of the fifth commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee" (Ex. 20:12). Subordinates in a family owe allegiance and economic support to superiors. This is an aspect of hierarchy, not inheritance. Hierarchy is point two of the biblical covenant.[1]

A. Responsibility and Welfare

The issue that Paul is dealing with in this section is whether the local church's funds should be used to permanently support local widows. He makes it clear that *the church is not the primary agency of welfare; the family is.* The possibility that a widow should rely on the state for her support is not entertained by Paul. Roman politics had created tax-funded welfare programs for Roman citizens—bread and circuses—but Paul does not discuss them.

This judicial question must be raised: How did Paul define the family for the purpose of determining its economic responsibility? Paul says that a widow should be supported by children [*tekna*] or

1. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 2. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, [1980] 2010), ch. 2.

ekgona. The Greek word *exgonoi* is difficult to translate precisely. It appears only in this verse. Its root word indicates generation or origin. The word in this context refers to descendants. Nephews are not descendants. So, the word indicates grandchildren rather than nephews. Paul lays down a rule: a widow should be supported financially by her sons and grandsons. Children are supposed to support their parents, he says. The Greek word for "parents" appears in only one other verse, where it implies a more extended relationship: "I thank God, whom I serve from my **forefathers** with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day" (II Tim. 1:3). Paul speaks in verse 3 of children and grandchildren; his concept of "parents" extends back more than one generation.

The West's family structure is usually referred to as a nuclear family. This is defined as a married couple—male and female—who reside in the same household, along with their children. This definition of the family excludes uncles, aunts, and cousins, who are part of the extended family. In a nuclear family, one decision-maker, usually the male who controls access to the house and who generates the income for the family, has final responsibility. He exercises a veto. *Legal control over access to the household is the mark of the head of a household*. Even if his wife possesses the legal authority to *disown* the house—a good economic definition of ownership[2]—her husband still possesses final authority within the family because she is legally subservient to him. He controls access to the property even when he does not possess the authority to sell it. *Ownership*, biblically defined, is *the legal right to exclude*. It began with God's restrictive boundaries around the tree in the garden of Eden. The head of the household possesses the legal authority to include or exclude his parents and his adult children.

In contrast is an extended patriarchal family, in which the oldest male possesses the veto unless he is mentally incompetent. He can gain legal access to his sons' homes because of his biological status.

Paul places primary economic responsibility for the care of the aged widow on those who owe their existence to the person seeking care. This transfers to the widowed mother or grandmother an ecclesiastically enforced legal claim on the wealth of other households. These claims are limited hierarchically. They are strictly vertical. There is no horizontal extension to nephews. The original *upward legal claim* of the children on part of the economic output of the parents

2. F. A. Harper, *Liberty: A Path to Its Recovery* (Irvington-on-Hudson, New York: Foundation for Economic Education, 1949), p. 106.

becomes a *downward legal claim* when the widow is aged and without property.

Paul acknowledges that the widow may be alone in life. In such a case, her commitment to active faith becomes a test of her eligibility to support. "Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day" (v. 5). Her mark of subordination is her constant intercessory prayer.

What if she has descendants who refuse to support her? If they are members of the church, they are candidates for excommunication. "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (v. 8). What if they are infidels? Or what if they do not take seriously the threat of excommunication? Should she be awarded permanent assistance by the church as a legal obligation?

B. To Deny the Faith

Paul's language is very strong. He compares these men unfavorably with covenant-breakers. Consider what Paul is saying. A man who will not support his aged mother or grandmother is worse than an infidel. It does not matter what his verbal profession of faith is; he is worse than an infidel. His refusal to support his mother or grandmother marks him as part of the covenant-breaking world.

How can this be? He has made a profession of faith in Christ. Doesn't this guarantee his salvation? No. Paul's language implies that his one-time profession of faith was devoid of saving faith. Words do not redeem a man; God's unilateral imputation of Christ's perfection redeems him. The one-time confessor is not part of the elect, despite his verbal profession. *The theological content of his public confession of faith is offset by the content of his ethics*. His actions have denied the faith. William Hendriksen wrote: "He has denied it not by means of *words* necessarily but (what is far often far worse) by means of his *sinful negligence*. Lack of positive action, the sin of omission, gives the lie to his profession of *faith* (subjective sense). Though he professes to be a Christian, he lacks the most precious of all the fruits that grow on the tree of a truly Christian life and conduct. He lacks *love*. Where this good *fruit* is absent, there cannot be a good tree."[3]

The modern welfare state has substituted coercion for love. It has taxed each generation to pay the retirement expenses of previous

3. William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1957), p. 171.

generations. This has produced a permanent political conflict between the generations. The program has also undermined the sense of personal responsibility in the minds of children and grandchildren toward aged parents. "We are already paying," they think. Economically, they are correct; they are paying. But they are not paying for their own parents individually; they are paying members of a voting bloc of politically well-organized oldsters, who rarely think that they are receiving enough. At zero price, there is always greater demand than supply—in this case, demand for money.

Because every industrial nation's compulsory retirement system is unfunded,[4] these programs are all heading for bankruptcy. The statistics are well known to the actuarians in charge of the programs, but they are unknown to the general public. The public does not understand that all of the money that has been collected by the government in the name of the retirement programs has been spent, either to support earlier retirees or for everything else for which governments write checks. The "retirement trust funds" are nothing more than today's political promises of payments by future politicians. The retirement trust funds are filled with government IOU's that are usually not counted as debts in a national government's official budget. Voters think that there will be money for them at their retirement. They have been deceived by the politicians. They have demanded such deception. They have voted out of office any politician who has told the truth and has called for a substitution of a plan to invest these funds in the private sector, let alone a politician who has called for the abolition of the program and the establishment of full family responsibility. Without exception, every Western industrial nation is facing bankruptcy, either of these programs or their governments.[5]

Peter G. Peterson was Chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations, the most influential private advisory organization in the United States. He had access to most of the world's senior political leaders in the final decades of the twentieth century. Here is his assessment.

> The leaders of the developed world all know what is coming. In private discussions I have had in recent years with President Clinton, Prime Minister Hashimoto, Prime Minister Thatcher, and other leaders of major economies, I learned that they were all fully briefed on the stunning demographic trends that lie ahead. But so far, despite the magnitude of the challenge, the

4. Chile's system is private, but it began late: the early 1980s.
5. Peter G. Peterson, *Gray Dawn: How the Coming Age Wave Will Transform America—And the World* (New York: Times Books, 1999).

> political response has been paralysis rather than action, fear not commitment. Hardly any country is doing much at all. Yet year after year the crisis approaches with the measurable certainty of an advancing tidal wave. . . .
>
> Rarely have so many multilateral bodies—such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)—agreed with such unanimity on the dimensions of a problem. Margaret Thatcher told me that she repeatedly tried to raise this issue at the G-7 [large industrial nations] summit meetings. Yet the answer from her fellow leaders was, in effect, "Of course aging is a profound challenge, but it doesn't hit until early in the next century. That means it won't hit on my watch."[6]

The modern industrial West, beginning with Chancellor Otto von Bismarck's introduction of a compulsory old-age retirement program in late-nineteenth-century Germany, has steadily transferred responsibility for the care of the aged from the family to the state. Now the state faces bankruptcy, and those who have trusted the state's promises face economic disaster in their old age. Their families, who have not prepared for the transfer of economic responsibility back to families, have no idea what is about to take place. Western voters thought in the twentieth century that they were wiser than God regarding old age care. In the twenty-first century, the West will find out that this assessment was incorrect. God is not mocked.

C. Helping the Truly Helpless

Consider the situation that Paul is dealing with in this passage. The widow has been adopted into the church through baptism. Her immediate biological family has abandoned her. If she is helpless, she deserves economic assistance. There are two other eligibility requirements. "Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man" (v. 9). "One" means one. Paul was not saying "the husband of *a* man." As a widow, she had obviously been married to a man. By adding this limiting factor, Paul makes it clear that a widow who remarried and then was widowed again is not eligible for permanent, guaranteed assistance from the institutional church. This means that an infertile woman who married two or more men who left her no inheritance, and who also possesses no dowry, must seek permanent charity elsewhere. Paul offers no explanation for this restriction. For whatever reason, the institutional church is not to be burdened permanently with her care.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 9.

On the basis of Paul's opposition to using the church's funds to support a twice-married, childless widow, his attitude toward compulsory wealth redistribution by the civil government can be inferred. He would have opposed any tax-funded welfare system. Moral claims, let alone legal claims, on other people's wealth are strictly limited in God's economy. If the local church where she is a member does not have any moral or legal responsibility financially for her support, then surely taxpayers do not have such a responsibility. The covenantal bond of the church is surely stronger than the state's bond.

Third, she must be of good reputation. "Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work" (v. 10). The accent here is on service. She has served in the past; it is time for her to be served.

Younger widows are not allowed to receive permanent aid. "But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry" (v. 11). He recommends this to all young widows (v. 14.) Why, then, did he add the following? "Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith" (v. 12). Their first faith had been Greek paganism. Abandoning this faith has not brought them under judgment. What did Paul have in mind here?

The Greek word for "first" sometimes means first in the sense of "chief" or "best."

> And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee (Mark 6:21).
>
> And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all (Mark 10:44).
>
> But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet (Luke 15:22).

What about the word, "wanton"? The Greek word is related to "delicious" or "luxurious." John wrote of the great harlot of Babylon, "How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously [luxuriously—NKJV], so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" (Rev. 18:7). These widowed women had wasted their inheritances by easy living. They had ignored God's warning: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth

her food in the harvest" (Prov. 6:6–8).[7] Why should the church now support them in their self-inflicted poverty? They had abandoned what had been their chief faith, which was faith in the God of sacrificial giving and personal service.

This was not a matter of eternal punishment. The Greek word translated as "damnation" can also be translated as "condemnation" or "judgment."

> And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss (Luke 23:39–41).

> And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come (I Cor. 11:34).

> For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? (I Peter 4:17)

Paul did not trust younger widows. He believed that they would become unproductive busybodies. "And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not" (v. 13). They need subordination. His suggested solution was marriage. "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (v. 14). Marriage can keep them in check. Keeping them in check is necessary, he says, "For some are already turned aside after Satan" (v. 15). He does not specify the nature of their infraction, but it seems to refer to an abandonment of the faith.

Here we have a contradiction with his recommendation in I Corinthians 7. "For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn" (I Cor. 7:7–9). Paul identified marriage in I Corinthians 7 as less productive for the kingdom of God than being unmarried. "But I would have you without care-

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7. Gary North, *Wisdom and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Proverbs* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2007] 2012), ch. 12.

fulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife" (I Cor. 7:32–33). He argues the reverse in I Timothy 5 with respect to widows, who presumably are more likely to marry widowers than marry never-married men. This is why I conclude that Paul's recommendation in I Corinthians 7 was extra-revelational, as he said. "But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment" (I Cor. 7:6). Paul's personal bias as a bachelor or widower negatively influenced his assessment of marriage in his first epistle to the Corinthians.[8] In I Timothy 5, he goes to the other extreme: a general distrust of all but old widows. This extreme position is the New Covenant's standard.

The widow who has been married twice must do what she can to find a husband to support her. A husband must care for his wife. The church is not to be burdened with this legal responsibility.

Conclusion

Paul says it as clearly as it can be said: "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed" (v. 16). The economic support of widows is primarily the responsibility of family members, not the institutional church. The church must limit its commitment to those without any visible means of support.

Paul here establishes a fundamental New Testament economic principle: *the family unit is the primary agency of welfare*. The church should intervene only when there are no family members to support a widow, or where they have abandoned their responsibility. A Christian head of household who abandons this responsibility is subject to excommunication. He is worse than a covenant-breaker.

Widows who are under age 60 have no permanent claim on church resources. Widows who have remarried and who become widowed again also have no moral claim. When church members are not morally required to support all widowed members of the church, then there is no New Testament case for establishing a tax-funded welfare system that rests on the assumption that non-Christians are legally and morally required to pay to support such widows. Even less likely is a case for Christians' having to support non-Christians.

8. Gary North, *Judgment and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), ch. 9.

8

THE POWER OF THE PURSE

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

I TIMOTHY 5:17–18

The theocentric focus of this passage is the authority of God's written word: the Bible. The institutional issue is ecclesiastical vertical hierarchy. Elders represent God covenantally because of the supreme authority of the Bible. They speak on behalf of God by way of the Bible.[1] So, they are entitled to financial support from members' donations to the local church.

A. From Case Law to General Application

Paul cites a Mosaic case law: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn" (Deut. 25:4).[2] This law is an aspect of hierarchy, specifically, God's authority as an employer. Men serve as God's delegated agents. An ox serves as a man's agent. There is a hierarchical system of responsibility upward and authority downward, with man as God's representative agent. This hierarchy includes the animal kingdom. I wrote in my commentary on Deuteronomy 25:4, second paragraph,

1. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 2. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, [1980] 2010), ch. 2.

2. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 63.

> How a man treats his ox reflects how he treats workers in general. The ox is a symbol of dominion.[3] It serves man as a working agent. It therefore is entitled to special protection. This is why the penalty for stealing and then either selling or destroying an ox is five-fold restitution (Ex. 22:1). For other forms of theft (except sheep), as well as for an ox or sheep found in the thief's possession, it is double restitution (Ex. 22:4).[4]

I must expand on this observation. Oxen and sheep in the Mosaic Covenant were judicially dealt with differently from other animals. This law governed sheep and oxen: "If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep" (Ex. 22:1). A second law governed sheep, oxen, and all other animals: "If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double" (Ex. 22:4). Sheep and oxen were given extra protection by the added penalty for destroying them or selling them. The reason for this was that these domesticated animals represented mankind in a unique way. The ox was (and remains) symbolic of the employed servant.[5] This is why Paul twice used the case law against the muzzling of ox as representative of employing men. Men use oxen for dominion purposes as a beasts of burden. Unlike a donkey or horse, both of which were unclean animals under the Mosaic law, an ox could lawfully be eaten. The same was true of sheep: they could be eaten after their wool production no longer produced a profit.

Rushdoony used the law against muzzling a working ox as a representative case of a general principle of biblical judicial interpretation. The jurisdiction of a case law is not confined to the specific judicial case to which it applies. It represents a broader principle of law.[6]

A laborer is entitled to his appropriate reward. This is a fundamental principle of economic justice. But the special honor of an elder has something unique to do with the judicial authority of an elder to interpret the word of God officially. The word of God, spoken

3. Gary North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), Part 3, *Tools of Dominion* (1990), p. 779.

4. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 61.

5. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 43:D.

6. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1973), pp. 11, 506. Rushdoony used the Ten Commandments as general classifying principles for all of the Mosaic Covenant's laws. I am not persuaded that the Decalogue is the primary means of classification of every case law. I have pursued another approach in my commentaries: to discover the theocentric principle that undergirds a law, which may or may not be related primarily to just one of the Ten Commandments.

from the pulpit at a church worship service, is an aspect of covenantal authority, for the church is a covenantal institution established by a covenantal oath. In contrast, an employer-employee relationship carries with it no covenantal sanction, for it is established by voluntary agreement or contract, not by a joint self-maledictory oath under God as the agent of sanctions. Paul here refers to a covenantal obligation, not a market wage. A market wage is the product of open entry and competitive bidding. A wage earned by a pastor is not the product of open entry and competitive bidding. Not everyone qualifies to be a pastor. It should be presumed by those ordaining a man for pastor that he has a special call from God.

In another epistle, Paul cited this case law to justify his entitlement to financial support from a church, which he refused to accept. "For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope" (I Cor. 9:9–10). Paul was not saying that this law does not apply to oxen, or that it was exclusively for man's benefit. It applies to oxen. The Greek word translated here as "altogether" in another context means "surely." "And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country" (Luke 4:23). It can also be translated as "by all means." "But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus" (Acts 18:21).

Paul says here that this case law was always meant for man more than it was for oxen. It applies to oxen as representatives of man. When a man treats an ox badly, this testifies to how he would treat other men, if he could get away with it.

B. Good Rulership

The Greek word for "rule" comes from two Greek words that mean "stand before." A ruler stands before the individual and tells him what to do. A teaching elder or minister traditionally stands before the congregation in a pulpit and tells them what God expects them to do. He possesses authority, as a ruler must.

Paul here differentiates elders who rule well from elders who do not. The former are worthy of double honor. Paul also differentiates

between those elders who work in word and doctrine from those who do not. The former are especially worthy of honor. There is no doubt that Paul did not distinguish the specific task of preaching from the general task of ruling. Nevertheless, there is no clear evidence in this text or in Titus 1 that Paul had in mind two separate offices: either bishop vs. elder or preaching-teaching elder vs. ruling elder. What both passages clearly indicate is that Paul had this in mind: (1) two levels of performance and (2) two functional distinctions in service.

There is a grammatical distinction between the words for bishop and elder. The Greek word for "bishop" is related to the Greek word for "visit." The Greek word for "elder" refers to age. "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the **eldest**, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst" (John 8:9). "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your **old men** shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:17). In every other instance in the New Testament, the word is used to describe an ecclesiastical officer. It is clear from this passage that elders do rule. Some rule well; others do not. Some specialize in preaching and teaching (doctrine); others do not.

If Paul is teaching a distinction between two offices—bishop vs. elder—then the text should reveal this. It does not. As far as this text reveals, there are *two names* for *two functions*: bishop and elder. The first function has to do with visitation. The second has to do with teaching: word and doctrine. *Paul does not say here that these two functions are judicially distinct*. Paul identifies all elders as holding the same office, some of whom are especially worthy of double honor because of their above-average performance or their specialization in doctrine and preaching. He does not single out bishops as automatically worthy of double honor.

C. Polity, Power, and the Purse

Paul here tells Timothy that those elders who rule well, especially those who teach, are worthy of double honor. He relates this distinction to a claim on financial support. The question arises: How is this claim to be enforced?

All elders exercise rule. Certain elders—those who rule well—are entitled to double honor, which includes financial support. This entitlement is a moral claim on a portion of the wealth of others. Those

who are under the authority of elders are told by Paul to render both honor and payment to certain elders, i.e., those who rule well.

1. Institutional Authority

This raises the issue of evaluation. *Who possesses the legitimate institutional authority to make the evaluation regarding the comparative performance of elders*? Do the elders meet together and vote on who among them deserve financial support? Or do church members vote to determine this? Or do bishops make this determination? The institutional church has never come to agreement on this issue.

Paul says that elders who rule well are entitled to financial support, especially those who labor in word and doctrine. The emphasis is on *theological instruction*, not visitation.

There are two other things that Paul does not say here. First, he does not say that one group of elders, called bishops, possesses the authority to decide who among a second group of elders, called elders, deserve financial support. Second, he does not say that elders who possess equal authority are to meet with each other in order to decide which ones among them deserve financial support.

Paul writes this letter as an apostle (1:1, 2:7). He tells Timothy, his representative, to instruct the church at Ephesus regarding certain matters regarding ecclesiastical office. One of these matters is the question of *access to formal church office*. This is a judicial issue: the formal investiture of authority, which in turn should be based on performance criteria, such as hospitality, monogamy, good reputation, etc. A separate judicial matter is the question of *pay deserved by certain elders*. This has to do with an economic distinction between members and elders: one group pays; the other is paid. It also has to do with a distinction between elders: ruling well vs. ruling poorly.

Paul does not identify who it is in the church who possesses the lawful authority to determine which candidates for office meet the criteria for holding office. Through Timothy, he expects the church at Ephesus to be informed about these criteria. We know that additional information places additional responsibility on the hearers (Luke 12:47–48).[7] This means that local members, not just elders, are responsible for seeing to it that the criteria for officers are met by the officers. This means that members who are not officers have a responsibility to impose sanctions on those officers who hold office unlawfully. What these

7. Gary North, *Treasure and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Luke*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 28.

sanctions are, Paul does not say. There are only two kinds of available ecclesiastical sanctions: judicial and economic. Members may or may not be allowed by denominational tradition to vote with their voices, hands, or ballots, but in every tradition, they can and do vote with their purses. The institutional church has never come to any agreement regarding the judicial sanctions that are lawfully possessed by members, but the church has always faced the reality of economic sanctions. The power of the purse is universal. It cuts across all denominational lines.

When Paul moves from a discussion of the criteria for church office to a discussion of that which some elders are owed by other church members, he raises the issue of church sanctions. Someone—unnamed—must make judgments regarding the performance of elders. These judgments must be enforced. Enforcement requires sanctions. What is the positive sanction? Money. What is the negative sanction? Withdrawal of economic support. These sanctions are imposed on elders. Because the epistle is directed to Timothy, the presumption is that its message is directed to church members, i.e., those who hear the epistle read to them. When this epistle was placed into the canon of Scripture by the church, the church thereby acknowledged that members possess the power of the purse.

Paul never specifically mandated judicial democracy for the church. That is, he did not say that members possess the lawful authority to grant church office or to withdraw it. What he says in this epistle is that church members do possess the lawful authority to decide which elders deserve their economic support: the power of the purse.

It could be argued that Paul's teaching is compatible with a hierarchical judicial system in which senior officers (bishops) decide which junior officers (elders) are entitled to economic support from members. Elders then threaten to impose judicial sanctions on church members who refuse to honor the judgment of the bishops by refusing to pay the elders identified by the bishops as deserving support.

The problem with this argument is that Paul's letter applied to all members of the church at Ephesus. All members were responsible for seeing to it that the criteria for church office were honored. They were also responsible for seeing to it that good rulers were paid. This raises a fundamental principle of ethics: *responsibility is always accompanied by authority*. There is no personal responsibility apart from the authority to impose sanctions in terms of personal judgments.[8] Paul

8. I speak here of the ethics of creaturehood. I am not speaking of a creature's responsibility or authority before God.

never wrote that church members possess the authority to vote for church officers, although this judicial authority seems to be impled by his listing of criteria for church officers. After all, why tell members about these criteria if members possess no institutional authority to bring judicial sanctions, either positive or negative? But it could also be argued that the sanctions they must bring are exclusively economic. Paul says only that the church owes economic support to good rulers. But if the right of church members to vote for church officers is denied, and their right to withhold economic support is also denied, then members in such a church are not personally responsible for what goes on in this church, for they possess no authority to impose formal sanctions of any kind. Such a denial of responsibility is contrary to Paul's letter. Paul's letter warns local church members to honor the criteria for church office and also honor the right of certain church officers to economic support. This means that Paul did authorize church members to impose the sanctions of economic support and the withdrawal of economic support.

Members have long ignored the criteria for church office, as have their officers. Never-married men are ordained to church office. Worse: married men in Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism are denied access to high church office.[9] Church members, for one reason or another, have always denied to the church the tithe that Jesus said men owe. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matt. 23:23).[10] So, church officers have evaded the criteria that Paul sets forth here for holding office, while church members have withheld the positive sanction of the tithe that Christ mandated. Rebellion against biblical law has been basic to church government throughout history. The officers have refused to abide by the specified judicial criteria, and the members have refused to abide by the specified economic criterion. Elders who, in terms of Paul's judicial criteria, are not entitled to hold office, nevertheless lay claim to members' money. Members withhold it, not because the elders were not lawfully ordained, but because members want their religion, but they want it cheap.

9. Chapter 3:D.

10. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 46.

2. Fragmentation and Competition

Churches do not insist that members tithe as a condition of communicant membership. There have been times in the distant past when the institutional church did insist on the tithe, but officers could never successfully enforce this requirement. As the church has fragmented, beginning in 1054, when the Western Church excommunicated the Eastern church, this disintegration process has reduced the believability of any church that has insisted that "there is no salvation outside the church, and we exclusively are the church." The ability of a denomination's elders or bishops to persuade members to pay a tithe to the church has been related to their ability to persuade members that there is no salvation outside the denomination.

The Protestant Reformation created something like open entry into the market for churches. Churches have repeatedly appealed to the civil government to enforce the churches' regional monopolies, but the state has been unable to successfully enforce this grant of monopoly privilege ever since the mid-seventeenth century in Protestant countries. There have been direct grants of privilege, and still are in Europe, but not monopolies. There have been indirect grants of privilege, such as zoning laws that restrict the construction of new churches, but these regulations rarely constitute absolute bans on new construction. The automobile overcomes such local restrictions.

The Protestant Reformation increased competition both for membership and financial support. It did this by denying the Roman Catholic Church's claim of monopolistic control over the sacraments.[11] The Protestant Reformation multiplied the number of denominations beyond the two that had existed since 1054. Denominationalism has steadily undermined the public's acceptance of any single church's assertion of exclusivity as God's ecclesiastical representative in history. In the second half of the twentieth century, Roman Catholicism abandoned this exclusivism.[12] A few Protestant groups still claim such

11. The Protestant Reformation was a battle over point four of the biblical covenant model: sanctions. It was a battle over the validity of prior ecclesiastical vows, and also over the lawful dispensing of the sacraments, including the judicial definition of the sacraments. It began over a theological dispute regarding the sale of indulgences, which the church alleged were certificates of exemption from eternal negative sanctions.

12. When a Boston Jesuit, Leonard Feeney, continued to preach the older doctrine, he was excommunicated in 1953. This placed him in an ironic position: preaching that there is no salvation outside the Roman Church, he found himself outside the Roman Church for preaching this. He was readmitted into the church shortly before his death in 1978. His doctrine, which had been taught by the Roman Church throughout most of its history, by then had become just one more opinion among many—one no longer

monopoly status,[13] but the general Protestant view is that salvation is based on God's grace through an individual's faith, without any ministerial intermediation necessary to salvation. Parachurch ministries have also entered into competition with churches for financial support from Christians.

This competitive ecclesiastical market for members and money has moved churches in the direction of independency. Individual members decide how much money they will donate to a local church. Most Protestant churches allow members to elect church officers, who in turn make decisions regarding the hiring and firing of ministers, as well as ministers' salary levels. Democracy has become dominant: either formally or economically, or both. Members retain power over their individual purses, and this shapes polity, both officially and unofficially.

3. Authority and the Flow of Funds

Judicial authority flows upward from the people and downward from their representatives. This is a two-way flow of authority (Lev. 4).[14] This is why God holds nations responsible for the actions of their leaders. This is why bad decisions by political leaders can have terrible effects in the lives of the citizenry.

Funds flow upward from those who are represented to those who represent them. This is true in both church government and civil government. Productivity originates in the efforts of church members or political citizens. A portion of the economic results of their productivity flows upward. *Representative authority flows downward, but final judicial authority and also final economic authority both lodge at the bottom*. Those people who are represented always have some degree of power over those who represent them, even in tyrannies. *All forms of temporal government rely on self-government*. A central government possesses insufficient economic resources to compel large numbers of people to do anything that they have decided to resist, whether officially or unofficially. When those who are represented decide not to obey those who represent them, the representatives must either change the minds of the recalcitrant masses or else lose power.

Final authority in any system of government corresponds with the source of the funding. Final judicial authority over individual members lies

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widely shared. To take him back was an exercise in the new ecumenical spirit.

13. An example is the Church of Christ.

14. Gary North, *Boundaries and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Leviticus*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1994] 2012), ch. 4.

with the hierarchy's senior officials, but final judicial authority with respect to the system of authority itself always lies at the bottom. This is why, in the long run, God holds individuals corporately responsible for what their leaders do in their name.

Economics reflects and reinforces this structure of judicial authority. Because *economic productivity* lies at the bottom of the hierarchy, so does *economic authority*. The hierarchical system must be funded. The producer at the bottom therefore retains a final veto if he is a free man. He can lawfully refuse to work. *Every legally free man has a fundamental right not to work*. Israel's exodus from Egypt is the supreme example of the right not to work. Their deliverance from slavery meant their right not to work for their former masters, who had enslaved them unlawfully.

Paul in this passage establishes a distinction regarding honor among elders, which he says is a distinction regarding funding. There are elders who do not rule well. The local congregation is not required to pay every elder. This clearly lodges final institutional authority over money with the members. As the delegated owners of God's money, they retain responsibility for deciding where it should go.

Because the local congregation is empowered by God to decide who gets paid and who does not, it possesses economic authority. Even in hierarchical denominations, local congregations retain most of the authority. The main issue is not the exercise of the franchise. Members in some denominations may not be allowed to vote regarding which elders are ordained to office. This is true in the case of prelacy generally and also Presbyterianism with respect to teaching elders, who are members of a presbytery rather than a congregation. Members nevertheless retain their God-given authority to reward those elders who rule well. This means that they possess the God-given authority to withhold payment from elders who, in their opinion, do not rule well. Members can voluntarily leave the local church in order to attend somewhere else. They take their purses with them. Legal authority may or may not lodge in the denomination's corporate assembly of members, but economic authority always does.

In the free market, an owner retains legal control over a resource. Customers possess the authority to assess this resource's value even though they do not own it. Competitive bidding—sellers vs. sellers, buyers vs. buyers—sets the market price of every economic resource in a free market. Owners can decide whether or not to offer an item

for sale, but they do not determine the demand for their resource beyond their own personal demand. Customers determine demand.

The process of establishing the value of services supplied by elders is analogous to the free market's pricing system. Church membership is voluntary. Candidates for church office compete against each other. Judicial screening determines the supply of elders: the ordination process. Local congregations may ordain men directly, or a hierarchy of already ordained elders may do this on behalf of the members. In either case, the value of elders' services, with respect to their wages, is determined by members, who decide how much money to donate to a local church.

There is, in addition, competition among churches for members and elders. This affects the wages paid to elders. There is open entry for new congregations.

If every church member were required to tithe as a condition of communicant membership—access to the Lord's Supper—then formal economic authority would be transferred to that agency within the church which hires and fires elders, and which also determines the quality of their performance. I am aware of no denomination today that claims that its members have an obligation to tithe as a condition of participating in the sacraments. Therefore, if donors decide not to pay, the formal authority possessed by elders to extract payment from members becomes worthless, i.e., of zero market value.

If every communicant member were required to tithe as a condition of voting in church elections, then judicial authority in the church would tend to follow the flow of funds. Those who pay their tithes would gain corporate authority over the allocation of these funds. I am aware of no church that mandates payment of a tithe as a condition of the right to vote. Those members who do not tithe possess equal judicial authority—one member, one vote—with those who do tithe.

In churches where members cannot vote for elders, they can vote with their pocketbooks or with their feet. They can donate less money or leave the local church. Elders or bishops may retain the formal authority to allocate the church's income autonomously, but this income will depend on the members' assessment of the quality of rulership exercised by the elders. The power of the purse shapes denominational polity and influence.[15]

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15. Mainline Protestant denominations in the United States have suffered from reduced growth in both membership and donations, compared with evangelical churches,

4. Democracy and the Veto

Legal access to church office is different from the legal authority under God to determine who rules well. Paul here establishes the legal authority of local church members to determine which elders are worthy of their economic support. *Members possess a lawful economic veto*. This is not merely a matter of functional economic authority. It is a legal authority established by Paul.

The laymen's legal authority over the payment of elders has influenced church polity throughout history. Debates over polity among the denominational traditions have not been resolved. There is no agreement regarding bishops, elders, and the locus of the authority to ordain officers. Despite these disagreements, the power of the purse has moved Christianity in the direction of localism. *Hierarchies must respond to the flow of funds if they are to survive*. Individual laymen possess lawful and operational authority over the allocation of their money. Corporately, they also possess a God-given authority over the allocation of the elders' wages. Paul makes this judicial principle clear in this passage. Elders in certain hierarchical church traditions have long resisted this principle of the judicial authority of laymen over payment to elders, but, over time, all branches of the church have accommodated this principle to some degree.

The institutional church is inherently democratic. This has been an important lesson of church history. The institutional church depends on donations. Donors possess legal authority over their money. *The individual's conscience ultimately is the final economic authority under God*. No church council can remove this authority. The member retains an economic veto. Paul acknowledges this final economic authority in this passage.

D. Taxation and Legitimacy

Civil governments are similarly constrained. Historically, kings have faced resistance from lower authorities regarding the level of taxation. The best example of this constraint in the Bible is the successful rebellion of Jeroboam and the ten tribes against the high-tax regime

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ever since 1926, the year following the Scopes "monkey" trial. Robert T. Handy, "The American Religious Depression, 1925–1935," *Church History*, 29 (1960), pp. 3–16. This disparity increased after 1960. Members have brought negative sanctions on the liberal hierarchies. There has also been attrition due to the normal process of death and replacement. Liberal denominations are not replacing their dead. The spiritually dead are burying the biologically dead.

of Rehoboam (I Kings 12).[16] The best example of this constraint in Western history is the Magna Carta (1215), in which barons and the lower military orders extracted from England's King John the acceptance of their authority to ratify or reject his tax policies. Civil governments always face taxpayer resistance.

1. Taxation and Localism

The power of national civil governments to compel payment retards the development of localism. The greater the power of the central government to collect taxes, the more centralized the state becomes. Money flows upward; so does power. The relationship between money and power is self-reinforcing, up to a point. At some point in history, however, the power of a particular civil government to collect taxes begins to fade. When it does, tax revolts produce decentralization. The centuries-long disintegration of the Western Roman Empire is the supreme example of this process in history.

The multiplication of political jurisdictions reduces the ability of central governments to collect taxes directly from the public. This is analogous to the effects of the Protestant Reformation. Competition for the output of citizens enables voters to make political decisions regarding how much to pay and which governments get what percentage of their wealth.

A popular slogan in the English American colonies in the years preceding the American Revolution (1775–83) was this: "No taxation without representation." This slogan was an extension of the principle that undergirded the Magna Carta. Colonists who favored resistance to the British Parliament argued that local colonial legislatures, not Parliament, possessed the lawful authority to tax citizens. Parliamentary theorists denied this principle of taxation. Technically, Parliament ever since 1689 has not had any formal restraints on its sovereignty. Realistically, it has had many restraints. The success of the American Revolution made clear to Parliament's defenders just how relevant these restraints were.

In the early modern period of Western European Civilization, beginning around 1500, there began a consolidation of civil governments. Soon after, the Protestant Reformation weakened the authority of a centralized church to oppose these new national governments in Northern Europe. This political centralization process visibly

16. Gary North, *Disobedience and Defeat: An Economic Commentary on the Historical Books* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 20.

peaked on December 31, 1991, when the Soviet Union collapsed in a nearly bloodless transfer of power from the Communist Party.[17] It is always difficult to date precisely a civilization-wide change, but that event surely represented a change in direction. The break-up of the Soviet Empire into a confederation of states immediately followed. The multiplication of nations after the end of World War II in 1945 has continued. The ability of central governments to enforce domestic peace and security is fading.[18] The looming bankruptcy of Western industrial nations' programs of tax-funded retirement and medical care of the aged[19] threatens to undermine the legitimacy of these governments.

The decentralization of ecclesiastical authority that began with the Protestant Reformation led to the centralization of regional political power in Europe. This centralization now seems to have reached its limits. Above all, the limit on taxation marks this reversal. It is becoming clear that high-tax nations lose their ability to compete economically in international markets against low-tax nations.

2. Competition in Taxation

Today, what the Protestant Reformation began in ecclesiology, the free market is producing in politics. Decentralization is making itself felt. The inability of churches to collect donations from members who can walk across the street and join another church is matched by the inability of civil governments to collect taxes from businesses that can move to another jurisdiction. Competition in taxation has appeared. Businesses move outside a nation or to regions inside where local taxes are lower. Price competition among taxing authorities is reducing the power of the state.

Little of this was evident as recently as 1975. During the 1980's, England's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, America's President Ronald Reagan, and Communist China's Premier Deng Xiaoping provided rhetoric for reduced taxation and reduced government control over the economy. All three followed through politically on their rhetoric. Thatcher and Reagan achieved reductions in the rate of taxation

17. Michael Dobbs, *Down with Big Brother: The Fall of the Soviet Empire* (New York: Knopf, 1997), pp. 374–410.

18. Jacques Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life: 1500 to the Present* (New York: HarperCollins, 2000), pp. 776–77. Martin van Creveld, *The Rise and Decline of the State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 394–408.

19. Peter G. Peterson, *Gray Dawn: How the Coming Age Wave Will Transform America—And the World* (Times Books, 1999).

on the higher income brackets. Deng achieved a reduction in direct government control over business. All three nations experienced renewed economic growth, especially China, which had been far more regulated than England or America.

What the Western church experienced first, beginning with the Protestant Reformation, the state has now begun to experience: *competition among jurisdictions*. This echo effect from church to state took almost five centuries. But there had been a previous echo effect. What the Roman state experienced after the second century, the Western church experienced fourteen centuries later: *decentralization and a loss of authority*. The early church had imitated the political centralization of Rome. The church never attained equal power, for the decline of the Roman Empire and its economy was irreversible by the time Christian emperors came to power in the fourth century. The break-up of imperial Rome made impossible ecclesiastically anything like the centralization of power and money that the West's largest nation-states achieved after 1500.

The early church self-consciously adopted much of the structure of the Roman state, beginning no later than the mid-fourth century. *The Roman state became the institutional model for the medieval church*. The modern secular state has imitated imperial Rome's extension of power. This imitation was self-conscious, beginning with the Renaissance's revival of republican Rome as the ideal political order. As surely as republican Rome's constant warfare transformed it into imperial Rome, so did the constant warfare of Renaissance Italy's city-states erode their republican liberties.

The modern state has now begun to retrace imperial Rome's decline, after Rome's overextension began to erode the ability of its taxing agents to collect wealth from the oppressed residents of the empire. Resistance to state power is now growing. The weapons of this resistance are military and economic. The heart of both processes is price competition. Weapons keep getting cheaper, and so does the flow of capital. The ability of central governments to extract wealth from distant nations and nearby taxpayers is declining.

A transfer of political legitimacy always accompanies any sustained reduction of political power. The early modern Renaissance nation-states of Northern Europe provided protection for regional Protestant churches. In exchange, these churches offered legitimacy to the civil rulers. This dual process eroded the authority of the Roman Church, which could not impose physical sanctions without civil cooperation.

Spain attempted to become the European enforcer for the Vatican in the sixteenth century. The attempt failed. Spain faded as a political force after England's defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Protestantism prospered economically. But after the bloody civil wars of the mid-seventeenth century in the German states and the British Isles, it was humanism, not Protestantism, that received credit for political freedom, economic growth, and technological progress. Social theorists believed that Christianity and the Bible could not provide a method of obtaining agreed-upon answers to social and political problems. Intellectuals sought agreement through appeals to a common reason. The intellectual and political influence of all churches faded. Humanism gained steadily in public legitimacy after the French Revolution (1789–94), despite its horrors.

With the Renaissance, the religion of humanism hitched its wagon to the star of the modern state. It had to. Its role model was classical humanism, which had also hitched its star to the state: first, the Greek polis; then, Rome's empire. This alliance between humanism and statism accelerated rapidly after the political standards of Enlightenment humanism led to the United States Constitution (1788)[20] and the French Revolution.

Next, the humanist state created its own established church: tax-funded schools. By 1810, this church was well-established in France. It took until 1900 to consolidate the process in the United States, where private education has not died out completely.[21] But confidence in the state's abilities to ensure prosperity has now begun to fade, and so has public confidence in the more self-conscious and consistent institutions of humanism. The ability of humanism's institutions to extract wealth from the public through its enforcer, the secular state,

20. Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), Part 3. I have updated this: *Conspiracy in Philadelphia: Origins of the United States Constitution* (Harrisonburg, Virginia: Dominion Educational Ministries, Inc., 2004).

21. The most prestigious universities in the United States, with one exception, are privately funded. The exception is the University of California at Berkeley, created in the early 1870s. They are: Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Berkeley, Stanford, Chicago, and Columbia, with Harvard always at the top, ever since its founding in 1636. This group remains constant, generation after generation. All of them are equally secular. Tax-funded higher education below these premier institutions is dominant, and has been since about 1900. There are about a dozen very high-prestige, little-known four-year private colleges, and about the same number college preparation academies in the Northeast for the sons of the rich and well-connected, but tax-funded education is what most Americans have faith in. This faith is now wavering, but it presently triumphs by default.

is reminiscent of the sixteenth-century Vatican's attempt to extract wealth and obedience from Northern Europeans by means of Spain's flow of gold and power. That dream sank with the Armada.

Conclusion

The laymen's power of the purse is guaranteed ecclesiastically by Paul's observation that some elders rule well, while others do not. The former are worthy of economic support. The others are not. Someone must make the assessment of rulership. This someone is the communicant member. He retains his right to allocate his money. If the local church is faithful, allocating money to elders who rule well and who also meet the criteria for eldership, then members are supposed to tithe to the local church. If these standards are not upheld by the ordaining agency, then a man has the right to look elsewhere for membership.

A man's tithe is to go to his local congregation.[22] But members are supposed to retain the right to assess the performance of their elders. If this right is negated by the elimination of a tither's right to vote for those who will exercise rule over them, as is the case in prelacy, then members are allowed by God to transfer membership without restriction. Not to permit this would constitute a denial of the right of members to assess the performance of their elders.

Competing churches have reduced pressures on members to pay tithes. Members use this competition to avoid meeting their obligation to tithe (Matt. 23:23). This is rebellion. The tithe is morally mandatory for members. This fact is not to became a justification for churches to ordain men who do not meet God's qualifications, or to pay men who do not rule well.

Churches are democratic if they allow all members vote regarding (1) those who will serve in church offices, and (2) how much money to pay them. This transfers judicial authority to non-tithing members. But because of the effects of Pareto's unexplained law, approximately 20% of the members will contribute approximately 80% of the church's income. Whether they control the vote or not, these members will control policy because of the threat of their departure.

Western churches have moved in the direction of laymen's control. Their source of funding made this inevitable. So did the break-up of

22. Gary North, *Tithing and the Church* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1994). Gary North, *The Covenantal Tithe* (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, 2011).

the international church in 1054 and after 1517 in the Western church. Any denomination's claim of monopoly status over the sacraments and access to the road to heaven has been challenged by the proliferation of rival churches. People have gone shopping for churches in much the same way that they have shopped for other services. They have decided which churches best meet their needs and beliefs. The twentieth century made universal a democratic tendency that was implicit in the Protestant Reformation. Luther's declaration of the right of conscience was ratified by the laymen's power of the purse. This trend toward democracy and local control became visible in Roman Catholicism after Vatican II in the early 1960s.

This trend has also brought about an increased influence by women, for in all branches of the Western church, women have been in the majority.[23] Husbands have long granted to women the authority to allocate part of the family budget to religious purposes. This, plus their donations of time, have gained women great influence over churches and parachurch ministries. No matter what church officers decree, she who pays the piper calls, if not the tune, then at least the orchestral arrangement.

Economic democracy extends from church to state. An individual can decide where his after-tax money goes, meaning the after-tax output of his productivity. He decides the degree of his cooperation with the state by means of voting and also by means of his participation in the division of labor economy. If he grows tired of paying so many taxes, he can refuse to work for money. He can grow his own food. He can withdraw from the division-of-labor economy. He is responsible before God for what he does (Luke 12:47–48).[24] No earthly committee will mediate for him on judgment day. So, in principle, *conscience determines where the income from a person's productivity goes*. The Protestant principle of the authority of the individual conscience is manifested in church and state through the individual's power over his purse.

23. Leon J. Podles, *The Church Impotent: The Feminization of Christianity* (Dallas, Texas: Spence, 1999).

24. North, *Treasure and Dominion*, ch. 28.

9

MASTERS AND SERVANTS

> *Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.*
>
> I TIMOTHY 6:1–2

The theocentric principle here is the holiness of God. Specifically, it is the holiness of God's name. Holiness is point three of the biblical covenant. It also refers to boundaries.[1] Paul's commandment is an aspect of the third commandment: the prohibition against taking God's name in vain. There is a boundary around God's name. The context of God's holy name here is the exercise of Christian faith, which involves obedience to lawful authorities: point two of the biblical covenant model.[2] Here, point three—holiness—is linked to point two: hierarchy/representation. Slave owners represent God, Paul says. But so do covenant-keeping slaves, who impute honor to their masters. Rendering judgment is an aspect of sanctions: point four of the biblical covenant.[3]

A. Imputed Honor and Faithful Service

Paul is speaking here of slaves, not temporary hired servants. The Greek word, *doulos*, is the same for both forms of subordination. The

1. Gary North, *Boundaries and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Leviticus*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1994] 2012).

2. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 2. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, [1980] 2010), ch. 2.

3. Sutton, ch. 4. North, ch. 4.

differentiating factor is Paul's reference to a yoke. A person who is under a yoke is not a hired servant; he is a slave. In the same way that Christians are permanent slaves of Christ, not merely part-time hired servants, so are slaves to their masters. Christ told His followers: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:29–30). It is not a part-time yoke.

1. Imputation

The slave is required to count his master as honorable. The Greek word here translated as "count" is used frequently for "rule" or "govern," "ruler" or "governor."

> And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a **Governor**, that shall rule my people Israel (Matt. 2:6).

> But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is **chief**, as he that doth serve (Luke 22:26).

> Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, **chief** men among the brethren (Acts 15:22).

The same word is also translated as "thought" or "count," in the sense of making an evaluation.

> Who, being in the form of God, **thought** it not robbery to be equal with God (Phil. 2:6).

> But what things were gain to me, those I **counted** loss for Christ (Phil. 3:7).

> Yea doubtless, and I **count** all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ (Phil. 3:8).

The meaning of the Greek word is tied to authority: *the authority to make an evaluation*. The person who evaluates anything renders judgment. He evaluates something in terms of standards. He is under authority and law in his capacity as a person in authority who evaluates the situation. He is part of a hierarchy: God > law > man. He who renders judgment is also the object of God's authoritative rendering of judgment. Men are called on by God to render judgment in terms of God's higher, authoritative judgment. Covenant-keepers are supernaturally enabled to do this. "For who hath known the mind of

the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" (I Cor. 2:16).[4]

The slave is to render judgment on his master. He is to count him worthy of all honor due to legitimate rulers. How can this be done when a master is evil? *The slave should do this because he recognizes that God has placed him in a position of subordination*. History is not random; it is providential. The slave is to honor God's hierarchical control over history by honoring his master as legally worthy of honor. The honor in question is the honor associated with obedience. It means "acknowledging one's legally subordinate position in thought, word, and deed." It does not mean that the slave is to imagine that an evil master is any less evil because of his authority over the slave.

The Christian slave is God's designated agent of imputation. He possesses the mind of Christ. *Even though he is functionally and judicially subordinate, he is covenantally superior. He imputes on behalf of God*. He is required by God to defend the integrity of this lawful imputation by serving his master faithfully. When he does this, he thereby heaps coals of fire on his wicked master's head (Rom. 12:19–21).[5] He brings negative sanctions on him in eternity by bringing positive sanctions on him in history.

How can someone who is functionally and judicially subordinate be a master in God's eyes? The answer is seen best in Christ on the cross. He was judicially and functionally subordinate to Rome and Israel, but He pronounced judgment. He extended mercy. "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots" (Luke 23:34). Peter later honored Christ's judgment when presenting his covenant lawsuit before Israel. "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot [know] that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers" (Acts 3:14–17). So, the authority to render judgment on God's behalf comes with the imputation of Christ's righteousness. "And I appoint unto

4. Gary North, *Judgment and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), ch. 2.

5. Gary North, *Cooperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 10.

you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:29–30).[6]

2. Rendering Honor

What is the meaning of "honor"? The Greek word can mean "price,"[7] but it generally refers to a position of high esteem. The word is applied to God and Christ.

> For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country (John 4:44).
>
> Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen (I Tim. 1:17).
>
> Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen (I Tim. 6:16).
>
> And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever (Rev. 4:9).

In these contexts, the Greek word refers to a hierarchy. He who is at the top of a hierarchy is worthy of honor from those under his authority. So, for a slave to render judgment with respect to a master, he must first count him worthy of obedience. *The slave must honor the hierarchy*. The slave is a permanent member of this hierarchy. He cannot lawfully quit or run away, as Paul understood when he wrote to Philemon, the owner of an escaped slave, Onesimus. "For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever" (Phm. 1:15).

Paul teaches here that honor is owed by the slave to the owner. The owner does not owe manumission to the slave. This legal relationship was one-way: from bottom to top. This is a New Testament document. It cannot legitimately be ignored, however disturbing its implications may be for modern Christians.

3. Serving God and Men

This imputation of honor is based on the master's office, not his performance. The slave is under the master's authority. Because the master is worthy of all honor due to legitimate rulers, the slave should serve efficiently. He is required by God to render superior service to

6. Gary North, *Treasure and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Luke*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 51.

7. Matthew 27:6, 9; Acts 4:34; Acts 5:2–3; Acts 19:19.

the master irrespective of any incentives offered for superior performance. The slave is to regard his work as work for God, even if his master is an evil man. The master benefits even though he does not impute superior value to the slave's work.

The slave may expect the master to regard faithful service as faithful. This expectation implicitly rests on the assumption of God's common grace. Why should a covenant-breaking master evaluate correctly the faithfulness of his slave? Only because God has restrained the master's sin-bent powers of evaluation. It should come as no surprise to a slave that his covenant-breaking master does not appreciate him. The ethical issue is the response of the slave to his master's incorrect evaluation of the value of the slave's services. Paul sets forth the proper response: obedience. This obedience is owed irrespective of the master's powers of evaluation.

This requirement runs counter to human nature, which is fallen. More important, it runs counter to the system of sanctions that governs free economic institutions. *It calls on the slave to render something for nothing*, i.e., to render faithful service in the absence of direct positive incentives from the master. Paul calls on Christian slaves to do this because they serve a greater Master, who has placed them under a permanent system of vertical hierarchy in history. They cannot leave without permission, so their work is tied to service to the master. *To serve God well, slaves must serve their owners well.* Their reward will be from God in eternity, and possibly in history. There are positive sanctions, but not always in history.

This verse implies the existence of *a system of cause and effect that runs counter to other theories of self-interested human action*. The master is to benefit from the work of Christian slaves, even if he is a covenant-breaker. Is this not a situation where the life of the covenant-keeper is expended in order to increase the inheritance of the covenant-breaker? If this is the case, then what of this principle? "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just" (Prov. 13:22).[8]

Obedience to lawful authority is a means of imposing negative eternal sanctions: coals of fire (Rom. 12:19–21). It is also a way of gaining positive sanctions in history. There is common grace.[9] A

8. Gary North, *Wisdom and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Proverbs* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2007] 2012), ch. 41.

9. Gary North, *Dominion and Common Grace: The Biblical Basis of Progress* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987).

faithful testimony through obedience is a testimony to the gospel. A master is rarely so blind that he cannot distinguish faithful service from rebellion. There is common grace in history. The obedient slave testifies to God's grace to the master.

4. Subsidizing Evil

The defender of the free market argues that faithful service will be rewarded. The master buys improved service. But this assumes a world in which slaves respond better when they are treated better. *Paul tells slaves to obey, irrespective of sanctions received*. Would this practice undermine the good treatment of slaves? It rewards evil, subsidizing bad performance by masters. Does God's law subsidize evil? God's civil law does not, but this requirement does. What is the explanation for this seeming anomaly, i.e., that covenant-keepers are called by God to subsidize evil?

There are at least three reasons. First, this law reduces lawless rebellion and potential bloodshed. It is anti-revolutionary. Social peace is subsidized by the individual slave's obedience. Social peace is a blessing. The implication of this law is that *social peace is a superior policy in the extension of God's kingdom than a policy of rebellion against lawful authority*. The obedient slave is subsidizing an evil master's bad behavior, but this is an indirect or secondary outcome of his obedience. *The slave is directly subsidizing social peace*. He is directly subsidizing the biblical principle of lawful hierarchy.

Second, this law rests on a theory of causation in which God defends His people from oppression. God correctly evaluates the value of the slave's service, even if the owner doesn't. God sees. *God intervenes in history on behalf of His people*. This is the teaching of covenant theology. The wicked master is setting himself up for God's judgment in history.

> The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them. He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity. His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity. He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor. He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net. He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones. He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his

> face; he will never see it. Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble. Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it. Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless. Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none (Ps. 10:4–15).

It is not disobedience on the part of a slave to call upon God in his prayers to act on his behalf. This is what the Israelites did in Egypt (Ex. 2:23). God answered their prayers, though not in the way they expected. He delivered them out of Egypt rather than delivering them inside Egypt or over Egypt.

Third, the slave-subsidized accumulation of wealth by the covenant-breaker will either pass into oblivion through bad decisions by the covenant-breaker or his heirs, or else he or his heirs will become covenant-keepers. "The wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just" (Prov. 13:22b). Christianity teaches dominion through service.[10] In no passage is this principle any clearer than this one.

The same principle of dominion through service undergirds the free market. The difference is, the free market's hierarchy is not oath-bound. It is horizontal.[11] Customers (sellers of money) are supreme, because money is the most marketable commodity. In a free market, competition among entrepreneurs for the money spent by customers transfers wealth to those entrepreneurs who best serve customers, as determined by the customers. In an unfree judicial order, this process takes longer, for the state interferes coercively with this allocation of the entrepreneurs' wealth by the customers. But the customers' authority cannot be overcome indefinitely. Producers stay in business by serving customers. To remain in control of his capital, which includes the slave, the slave owner must serve customers efficiently.

So, by serving a covenant-breaking owner, the faithful slave serves God and also serves customers. To the extent that the covenant-breaker's capital is put to evil uses, to this extent he is dissipating his capital. *The covenant-keeping slave can have confidence that his own efforts are not in vain in history*. Sooner or later, customers will benefit. The master is a middleman to the extent that he seeks a profit. The economic hierarchy still has customers in authority, irrespective of the legal hierarchy.

10. North, *Treasure and Dominion*, ch. 51.
11. Introduction:G:2.

B. Unlawful Rebellion

"Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed" (6:1). The Greek word translated here as "blasphemed" is elsewhere translated as "speak evil,"[12] "slanderously reported" (Rom. 3:8), and "defamed" (I Cor. 4:13). When used with respect to God, the King James Version adopts some variant of "blaspheme." Thus, to speak falsely, knowingly, and maliciously with respect to God is to commit blasphemy. This passage indicates that to speak falsely and maliciously against the doctrine of God is also to commit the sin of blasphemy. This does not mean that committing a theological error is blasphemous. It means that speaking falsely in a way that prejudices the truth is a form of defamation. It is breaking the ninth commandment against false witness, which has a judicial frame of reference.

What is Paul's concern in this passage? He warns Timothy to instruct the church that servants should honor their masters. *For slaves to become resentful or rebellious against their owners leads to the defamation of God and His doctrine*. How does this happen? By way of a false accusation. Those who hear of such rebellion by Christian servants may conclude that God authorizes this sort of rebellion. God does not authorize it. Paul makes this plain in the next sentence: "And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit."

A test of true faith for a slave, Paul implies, is faithfulness to the master. In the first sentence, Paul refers to masters in general. In the second sentence, he refers to Christian masters. The master is due respect in both cases. Why? Because of God's name and doctrine, Paul says explicitly. Why God's name and doctrine? Because of the vertical hierarchical nature of all reality, and because God, as the Creator, is the cosmic Owner of the universe. God has placed the slave in his subordinate position.

Obedience is a test of faith. The slave occupies a position of authority. He is under the master, but he is over some aspect of the creation. Man as a species is under God but over creation; so is the individual slave. He serves the master by adding to the master's wealth. The master increases his own productivity and output by means of the

12. Romans 14:16; I Cor. 10:30; I Peter 4:4, 14; II Peter 2:2, 10, 12; Jude 1:8, 10.

household division of labor in a vertical hierarchy. What is true for the master is equally true for the slave. The slave is part of this hierarchical system of production: vertically, under the owner; horizontally, under the customers. This in turn is an aspect of dominion. Paul's argument rests on a concept of *dominion through subordination*.[13]

This view of man's dominion over nature in history is opposed by most views of cause and effect. Most religions hold either to a view of conquest by force (e.g., Islam) or by a concept that dominion is illegitimate and in the long run impossible (e.g., Hinduism, Buddhism). The major exception to these views is the ideology of the free market. Free market economics teaches that service to the customer is the way to wealth. Wealth is the way to dominion over nature. In this sense, free market economics is consistent with Christianity.

The suggestion that a slave should honor his master is repellant to modern humanism. It is also repellant to modern revolutionary ideology. Both views recommend personal liberation by resistance or even open rebellion. *Paul's words cannot be reconciled with rebellion.* On the contrary, his message here is the opposite of revolution. Jesus Christ proclaimed the opposite of rebellion to captive individuals and captive nations. He recommended *productivity through peace*, not liberation through violent revolution.

> Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also (Matt. 5:38–39).[14]

> But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans [tax collectors] the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5:44–48).[15]

Paul's instructions to Timothy regarding slaves are consistent with Christ's words. Elsewhere, Paul wrote:

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13. Gary North, *Inherit the Earth: Biblical Blueprints for Economics* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987), ch. 2.

14. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 9.

15. *Ibid.*, ch. 10.

> Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:19–21).

Here, Paul was citing Solomon:

> If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee (Prov. 25:21–22).

This strategy of judgment through subordination rests on a presupposition: *God is the final Judge*. His final judgment will stand. Nothing can overcome it or deflect it. God's judgment is better than any civil government's justice or any individual's judgment. God's people are told to believe this. It is not that they are to ignore evil. Rather, it is that *God's remedy for systematic evil is goodness*. When an individual lives under a judicial order that promotes slavery, he is to conform until such time that defenders of justice are in a political position to end this institution by law.

C. Liberation Through Subordination

Paul fully understood that slavery is a second-best condition. He recommended liberation. "Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather" (I Cor. 7:21).[16] *Manumission is always the proper goal of every Christian slave*. An owner may decide to let his faithful servant go free as a reward for service above and beyond the call of duty. This is the owner's decision, but in a world where God is sovereign, manumission is ultimately God's decision.

1. Liberation from Sin

Biblical liberty begins with liberation from sin. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:31–34). Jesus served God faithfully, even unto death. This is the only judicial basis of every

16. North, *Judgment and Dominion*, ch. 8.

person's liberation from bondage to sin. Jesus subordinated Himself to the lawful powers of His day. Within three days, He rose from the dead. He then announced to His disciples, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18b).[17] The way to dominion over history is to follow Christ's example. Paul followed it.

> Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches (II Cor. 11:23–28).

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1).[18]

There was no doubt in Christ's mind regarding the legitimacy of conquest. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:19–20).[19] There was no doubt in Paul's mind, either. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet" (I Cor. 15:24–25).[20] What is at issue is the legitimate means of conquest.

Liberation by God is an aspect of Christian conquest. This conquest is self-reinforcing: it liberates individuals, and in doing so, it makes them more effective agents of liberation. This is why Paul recommended to every Christian slave that he accept manumission if it is offered.

It takes faith in the God of the Bible as the God of liberation in order to obey Paul's injunction. The slave must believe that liberation

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17. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 48.

18. North, *Judgment and Dominion*, ch. 14.

19. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 48; Kenneth L. Gentry, *The Greatness of the Great Commission: The Christian Enterprise in a Fallen World* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990).

20. North, *Judgment and Dominion*, ch. 16.

is God's goal, for liberation is an aspect of dominion. To obey with a pure heart, the slave must first accept the fact that *the ultimate bondage is bondage to sin* as the heir of Adam, God's disinherited son. Every man is under a yoke, either sin's or Christ's. If the covenant-keeper is under another man's yoke, the basis of his liberation in history becomes greater subordination to his master in the name of God. The slave must be willing to become a faithful servant of his master in order to reflect his new bondservice to the supreme Master, God. The Christian slave is legally under a man's yoke, but he is also legally under Christ's yoke. *The lawful way of release from man's yoke is faithful service under Christ's yoke*. This service must be internal: reckoning honor to the master. This is how Christians are to prevent the blaspheming of God's name.

Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852) was a novel that mobilized anti-slavery opinion in the North in the United States. The hero of the book is Uncle Tom, a faithful slave under the yoke of a moral monster, Simon Legree. Tom is a Christian. He obeys Legree for the sake of Christ. Legree despises Tom and Tom's faith. Tom's life ends after a savage whipping by Legree and a pair of black slave trustees. Tom dies with prayers of forgiveness for his tormentors (chapter 40). Over a century later, during the civil rights movement, "Uncle Tom" became a term of opprobrium among black activists. Any black who was not in favor of racial confrontation or even violence was dismissed as an Uncle Tom, a racial stereotype of subordination to white men's political power. The activists whipped their troops into line with this phrase. The anti-Christian and revolutionary character of the civil rights movement by the late 1960s, despite its origin in black Christian circles in the mid-1950s, was testified to by the widespread use of the phrase. A major goal of the leaders of the civil rights revolution was to replace Christianity with humanism. Many of them were clerics. They used the rhetoric of Christianity to further a militantly anti-Christian political agenda.

2. Divine Intervention

He who believes that self-conscious subordination brings dominion for oneself or one's heirs has to adopt a supernatural worldview. This is the worldview of Joseph in Egypt. Joseph's faithful service to Potiphar led to a false accusation against him by Potiphar's wife. He was thrown into prison. There, he took over the administration of the prison. Eventually, he rose to second in command in Egypt—technically under the authority of the Pharaoh, but in fact in charge of

Egypt's economy and its political order. This is the correct model for dominion, both personal and corporate.

It takes faith to believe this. It also takes a willingness to suffer unrighteous abuse. Jesus warned His followers: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake" (Matt. 5:11). He continued:

> Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5:43–48).[21]

The belief that subordination to state-sanctioned evil eventually produces dominion is not widespread. Christians in the late Roman Empire believed that they could not cooperate with the state on matters of public liturgy in a polytheistic empire, but they obeyed in everything else. This brought wave after wave of persecution on the church, for the essence of Rome's religion was the worship of the state through the worship of the reigning emperor.[22] The result of the church's resistance on liturgy but obedience to everything else was the capture of the empire by the church in the fourth century. By then, Christians had become grudgingly respected by the pagans because of their subordination and their honesty. But this replacement process took almost three centuries before a Christian emperor ascended to the throne. Centuries are too long a time frame for applying a strategy of dominion for most religions, other than those that are in some way influenced by the Bible.

3. Power Religion vs. Dominion Religion[23]

The lure of the power religion is great. It proclaims a rival system of cause and effect. Power is to be overcome by greater power. Power

21. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 10.

22. R. J. Rushdoony, *The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy* (Vallecito, California: Ross House [1971] 1995), ch. 5.

23. Gary North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), Part 1, *Representation and Dominion* (1985), Introduction:A, C.

is seen as the basis of dominion. This worldview rests on an error. Dominion is by example, by productivity, and by service. Dominion is by covenant.[24] God rewards this system of cause and effect, and His opponents also come to respect it, which eventually undermines their legitimacy and the social order that is based on the power religion.

The Bible's dominion religion is not opposed to the lawful exercise of civil power on behalf of righteousness. Civil sanctions are legitimate (Rom. 13:1–7).[25] But Christ and Paul were addressing people who were political outsiders, people who possessed little or no political authority. These people lived under a hierarchy established by an empire. *Empire is always the long-term political goal of the power religion*.[26] This goal always results in failure. Daniel was clear: the fifth and final empire belongs exclusively to the Holy One (Dan. 2:44–45).

The Bible presents *dominion* as the result of *liberation from sin*. Liberation from sin produces an attitude of victory. The victory over sin and death that was revealed in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is supposed to motivate covenant-keepers to obey God. There is life beyond death, victory in history before the end of time (I Cor. 15).[27] This new life is attained in history. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). Therefore, a token of the eternal victory over sin and Satan will also be attained by covenant-keepers in history. This is why the apostles were told by Christ to bring the nations under Christ's rule (Matt. 28:18–20).[28]

Within Christian circles, there has always been organized hostility to this message. Pietists embrace the escape religion.[29] This worldview separates victory in history from victory in eternity. In place of dominion by subordination, pietism proclaims subordination by subordination. It proclaims subordination as a way of life in history,

24. Sutton, *That You May Prosper*.

25. North, *Cooperation and Dominion*, ch. 11.

26. Of all wealthy nations on earth, Switzerland is least affected by either the power religion or the escape religion. Its people serve others by supplying banking services and other free market services. The nation remains neutral in international relations. Its men are skilled fighters and well-armed. The Swiss seek to conquer no nation. They seek only to maintain their own political sovereignty.

27. Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *He Shall Have Dominion: A Postmillennial Eschatology*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1992] 1997).

28. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 48.

29. Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Flight from Humanity: A Study of the Effect of Neoplatonism on Christianity* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1973); Gary DeMar and Peter Leithart, *The Reduction of Christianity: A Biblical Response to Dave Hunt* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1988).

not for the sake of the transformation of men and society, but for the sake of personal self-discipline. This is the religion of the monastery. But faithful service and self-sacrifice produce dominion even though a monastery's founder proclaimed the escape religion. This was the experience of medieval monasticism generally. Western European monasteries became centers of production—agriculturally, intellectually, financially, technologically, and even scientifically. The laws of genetics were discovered in 1865 by a monk, Gregor Mendel, who studied peas.

D. Covenant-Keeping Masters

Verse 2 refers to households run by covenant-keepers. "And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort." This raises the obvious question: Why should a Christian slave despise a Christian master?

The easiest answer is that the master refuses to free the slave. The slave may expect manumission by the owner based on their shared covenant, but the master does not agree. Paul makes it clear that this is not a valid excuse for a resentful attitude. There is no valid excuse mentioned in this or any other epistle from Paul. The owner does not owe his slave manumission. The slave owes the master obedience and honor.

Paul speaks of "partakers of the benefit." Who partakes of this benefit? Was Paul referring here to the masters or to their servants? The text in the Greek is not straightforward. It has what in English we call an indefinite pronoun reference—in this case, the word "they": "because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit." Someone is faithful and beloved. Does "they" refer to the masters? It seems to. But if it does, then who regards masters as faithful and beloved? Do the servants so regard their masters? Or does God? The latter, I believe, for Paul's warning is directed to the servants: do not despise masters. The argument is this: *because God regards masters well, so should servants*.

The servants are said to be partakers of the benefit which they—servants—show to their masters. In what way are they partakers? Because their service strengthens the household, which in turn protects the servants. The household is a confessionally covenantal unit when the master is a Christian, too. This household extends the kingdom

of God in history. The slave shares in this blessing. The household extends God's kingdom because of the presence of a covenant-keeping slave, just as Joseph's presence in Egypt extended God's kingdom.

E. Slavery Under the Mosaic Law

There were two broad types of slavery in the Mosaic economy: (1) the enslavement of Hebrews; (2) the enslavement of foreigners. The first category was broken down into three subcategories: (a) slavery for a failure to repay a zero-interest charitable loan (up to seven years, i.e., the year of release: Deut. 15:1–12);[30] (b) slavery for failure to repay a commercial loan (up to 49 years, i.e., the jubilee year: Lev. 25:25–28, 39–42);[31] (c) slavery to raise money to pay the victims of a criminal's actions (implied by the laws governing restitution: Ex. 22:1–9).

Foreigners were not protected by the year of jubilee. They could be enslaved permanently, their children becoming slaves at birth.[32]

> Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen for ever: but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigour (Lev. 25:44–46).

The nations of the ancient world harvested slaves after a war. God restricted this practice in Mosaic Israel. It was completely forbidden with respect to Canaanites. The Canaanites had to be utterly destroyed: "And thou shalt consume all the people which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee" (Deut. 7:16). It was partially forbidden with respect to conquered nations outside of Canaan. Defeated males had to be exterminated. The females were not to be executed. They were taken as slaves.

> When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto

30. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 36.

31. Gary North, *Boundaries and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Leviticus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1994] 2012), ch. 30.

32. *Ibid.*, ch. 31.

> thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword (Deut. 20:10–13).[33]

Tributaries paid taxes. This was the usual meaning of the Hebrew word, the major exception being Solomon's levy in manpower in Israel to build the temple (I Kings 5:13–14). As for serving the Israelites, this could be a reference to slavery, but the context suggests tribute: a tax paid to a conqueror. As for cities that refused to surrender, the entire male population was to be executed. The females could be taken captive (v. 14). In fact, they had to be brought home. To leave them as widows and orphans would have been murder. They were helpless. The execution of the males had destroyed the society's division of labor and the survivors' future. They could lawfully be enslaved or married (Deut. 21:10–13). If Israelites married these women, the women were no longer slaves. If they were subsequently divorced by their husbands, they became free women (v. 14). So, there were no slave offspring born to these captives. Their children would also become free adults.

Slaves in Israel could be imported from outside the land, yet probably not from the military activities of Israel—not unless citizens of cities that surrendered before the battle were subject to removal and enslavement in Israel. Because this threat would have made most men fight harder, refusing to surrender, it is unlikely that enslavement was the authorized form of service. Tribute was.

Then where did Israel's slaves come from originally? These Deuteronomic texts point to the lawful importation of slaves from foreign nations. Slaves that had been born in captivity inside Israel or outside, or people who had been taken captive by a foreign nation in a war, were legitimate for a Hebrew to buy. To buy such slaves was a form of liberation for them—liberation from Satan's dominion outside of Israel. They were placed under God inside a covenant-keeping household. There was one exception to foreign purchase: it was not lawful to buy any victim of a private kidnapping (Ex. 21:16).[34]

The Mosaic laws governing slavery were aspects of the land laws of Mosaic Israel. They were annulled when the kingdom was transferred to the church (Matt. 21:43). The land lost its holy status in

33. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 48.
34. Gary North, *Authority and Dominion*, Part 3, *Tools of Dominion* (1990), ch. ch. 34.

A.D. 70. It also lost its prophetic status. Shiloh had come, as prophesied (Gen. 49:10). He had pronounced judgment on the land, and had then enforced it.[35]

F. New Testament Revision: Limited Warfare

That Paul did not call for immediate abolition of all private forms of slavery is clear from this text. The question arises: On what legal basis was the child of a slave also a slave for life? On the basis of the judicial death of the father. If a man had been captured during a war, he could lawfully have been executed. He lived only by the mercy of the victors. In this sense, he was judicially dead as a free man. This was also true of his children, born and unborn. If he was then sold into slavery, the legal status of the parent passed to the family's covenant line. An Israelite could lawfully purchase a foreign slave. A similar situation prevailed in the case of the Gibeonites, who tricked the Israelites into granting them a peace treaty. Their deception saved their lives in the land. It also led to their enslavement (Joshua 9). Their heirs were still enslaved in David's day (II Sam. 21).

In contrast, a kidnapped person had not surrendered to a lawful authority. His or her heirs therefore did not lawfully become slaves. What the kidnapper did not lawfully own, he could not lawfully transfer or sell.

Beginning with the advent of Christian emperors, Christian societies have not enforced the Deuteronomic law mandating the extermination of defeated male civilians. Yet there is no explicit New Testament law that annuls Deuteronomy 20:10–13. The New Testament says nothing specific regarding how civilians must be treated during or after a war. Nevertheless, the Mosaic requirement of the extermination of civilian males and also the execution of males who surrender after a war has begun has ended in the New Covenant era. The Christian West has had a doctrine of war that insists that warriors kill warriors, but not defeated male civilians. This is a judicial break from the Mosaic law. What is the basis of this judicial discontinuity?

The laws governing Israel's conquest were land laws, i.e., tied to the land of Israel as a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6). The extermination of the Canaanites has never been the model for Christian warfare; neither has the execution of non-Canaanite male civilians after a battle. Why not? Here is one reason: *the church is international.* The

35. David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987).

goal of Christian evangelism is to recruit covenantal representatives of Christ in every nation (Matt. 28:18–20).There is no priestly (mediatorial) nation, any more than there is a priestly tribe. Evangelism is no longer to be accomplished through the purchase of captive pagans or the military conquest of pagan nations.

In Paul's day, Rome was still expanding its empire. Slaves were a by-product of these military conquests. Rome became a slave society because of the conquests by its armies. The slave markets followed Rome's armies.[36] For a covenant-keeper to buy a slave from this source was not the same as buying from a kidnapper. These conquests had not been part of a private slave-harvesting operation, i.e., kidnapping. It is true that there was a symbiotic relationship between the conquests and the profits for the generals and upper-class members of Roman society from the sale of slaves, but Roman conquests involved occupying territory. Enslavement was an aspect of politics. By the time of Augustus, Rome's supply of slaves from abroad slowed because the empire was at its maximum. Most slaves came from birth to existing slaves.[37]

By the time Christians gained political control over the empire, it was in its contraction phase. The older program of slave-harvesting had ceased. The church did not oppose slavery, but it did begin to have an effect on the doctrine of war. Mosaic extermination laws were never honored.

G. Abolition: Why the Long Delay?

The question arises: Why did it take over 1700 years from the writing of this epistle until the first rumblings of the abolitionist movement? A second question also arises: Why did it take only a century, 1780–1880, to convince the leaders of the West that slavery is not only immoral, it is a crime that must be suppressed by civil law? In short, why the long delay, followed by a rapid reversal of public opinion? What was the decisive change that led to abolition? Theology? Economics? Moral philosophy?

Bible-believing historians prefer not to ask these questions. The centuries-long blindness of the church regarding slavery embarrasses them. Their hesitancy to consider these questions in public indicates the comprehensive nature of the success of the abolitionist movement.

36. Milton Meltzer, *Slavery: A World History*, 2 vols. (n.p.: Da Capo, 1993), I, pp. 105–10.

37. *Ibid.*, I, p. 132.

This success was not merely institutional; it was ethical. It now extends to most men's minds in the non-Islamic West. Christians rarely think twice about the theological justification of their retroactive condemnation of private chattel slavery. They make the assumption that "everybody knows this." But throughout most of human history, hardly anyone knew this. There is a fundamental exegetical problem for abolitionism: *no biblical text explicitly abolishes slavery, while many passages condone it*. The anti-abolitionists in the church always had the better arguments from scripture, especially by appealing to Leviticus 25:44–46.

It was this realization that drove leading American abolitionists to Unitarianism and, after the Civil War (1861–65), to biblical higher criticism, which swept the English-speaking academic community almost overnight, beginning in 1875–76.[38] They perceived that the Bible, if true, did not appear to support the abolitionist cause. So, they denied the truth of the Bible. Other Unitarians had come to this Bible-denying position first, only later adopting abolitionism. William Lloyd Garrison concluded that the Bible must be subjected to the tests of reasonableness, historical confirmation, the facts of science, and man's intuition. "Truth is older than any parchment," he affirmed. His radical disciple, Henry Clarke Wright, proclaimed: "The Bible, If Opposed to Self-Evident Truth, is Self-Evident Falsehood." Charles Stearns said that the Old Testament is a tissue of lies, "no more the work of God than the Koran, or the Book of Mormon."[39]

Is the New Testament silent with regard to abolitionism? My answer: not silent, but subdued. I have argued that Christ announced the fulfillment of jubilee liberation, and therefore the release of all slaves in Israel. He uttered these words early in His ministry: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18–19).[40] This was the judicial basis of the abolition of permanent servitude in Mosaic Israel.[41] The fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 ended Mosaic servitude as a biblically authorized practice.

The question then arises: What about gentile societies?

38. Gary North, *Crossed Fingers: How the Liberals Captured the Presbyterian Church* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1996), pp. 160–61, 194.

39. Cited by David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 523.

40. North, *Treasure and Dominion*, ch. 6.

41. North, *Boundaries and Dominion*, ch. 31.

H. Kidnapping

Paul wrote this epistle to a Greek who was ministering to Greeks. Paul did not refer to the jubilee year, which did not exist outside of Israel, and not even inside Israel in Paul's day. He made his case against slavery on the basis of the immorality of kidnapping, as we have seen.[42]

If it is immoral to be a kidnapper, then it is immoral to buy slaves knowingly from a kidnapper. The existence of a ready market for slaves is what attracts profit-seekers to the crime of kidnapping. By providing the economic incentive, the buyer shares in the kidnapper's crime. Participation in the slave trade at any point is immoral. As surely as being a madam or a pimp for a prostitute is evil, so is spending money for the services rendered. Were there no purchasers, there would be no sellers.

The cause-and-effect relationship between buyers and sellers is not always understood. The initiating factor is the would-be seller's perception of future demand. If the seller does not believe that buyers will pay him for his products, he will not enter into the enterprise. Buyers confirm the sellers' speculation; non-buyers do not. *Buyers keep an industry alive*. With respect to slavery, the kidnapper was identified by Paul as an evildoer. The buyer was not identified as being equally evil judicially. But, economically speaking, the buyer is the source of the evil's profitability.

Paul does not here oppose the purchase of a slave from a family that owns slaves. The text is specific: kidnapping is prohibited. Paul never told his readers that it is immoral to own a slave. He sent the escaped slave Onesimus back to his owner, Philemon. If Paul had been an abolitionist, Philemon is the epistle in which he had an opportunity to make his case against slavery. He did not suggest anything of the kind. But Paul did ask Philemon to give Onesimus his freedom, i.e., treat him as if he were Paul. He reminded Philemon that he was in Paul's debt. He wrote: "For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever; Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord? If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say

42. Chapter 1, section on "Abolition."

to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides" (Phm. 1:15–19).

Paul also taught that a slave should accept manumission if it is offered. "Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather" (I Cor. 7:21).[43] A free man can serve God more effectively than a slave can. He possesses a wider range of choices. He becomes responsible for his own decisions.

So, we find in Paul's writings a clear acknowledgement that freedom is a benefit compared to servitude. This did not make Paul an abolitionist. It did not even make him unique. Most people throughout history have known that freedom is preferable to slavery. Slavery always has been seen as a curse to be avoided personally. But, also throughout history, free men benefitted from the enslavement of others.

I. Second Things Second

Institutional arrangements that are consistent with the Bible, but which are not mandated by the Bible, develop through time as a result of societies' adoption of certain legal principles that are found in the Bible. For example, there is no passage in the Bible that explicitly defends the political ideal of democracy or republican civil government. There are certain aspects of political rule that indicate that citizens who are bound by a common faith should exercise authority over their civil rulers (Lev. 4).[44] Another example: there is a system of appeals courts that perform the task of dealing with difficult cases, but the judicial system adopted recommended by Jethro and adopted by Moses (Ex. 18) was not mandated by the Mosaic law.[45] Trial by jury is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible. But is there no correlation between these institutional features of modern civil justice and biblical principles of civil justice? This seems unlikely, yet the developments historically could not have been predicted by the judges of Samson's day or by the early church fathers.

Church members are supposed to exercise judgment regarding the performance and pay of elders. Paul made this point clear in this epistle (5:17–18).[46] This principle of ecclesiastical authority points to a system of democratic rule for the church. Members should exercise

43. North, *Judgment and Dominion*, ch. 8.
44. North, *Boundaries and Dominion*, ch. 4.
45. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 19.
46. Chapter 7.

a veto. The same principle can be applied to civil government, even though it is not clear in the Bible that judges should be elected by the citizenry. Sooner or later, the office of judge evolves into the office of legislator.[47] This is because the task of officially interpreting the law is the same as writing new laws. Courts necessarily take on this legislative function to some degree. Different societies deal with the threat of judicial tyranny in different ways. They may create separate legislative institutions. They may create rival systems of courts. But, in the Christian West, societies have developed court systems that reflect Jethro's recommended court system.

These institutional developments have taken many centuries. There has been a pattern to these developments in many Christian countries throughout Europe, especially northern Europe. Christian scholars with a mastery of the historical materials, especially legal materials, have been in short supply. Detailed studies of medieval documents is a recent development—within the last 130 years.[48] Humanism has been the dominant worldview of medieval historians, including legal historians. They have not devoted lifetimes to studying the development of canon law and civil law, comparing both developments to biblical law. So, we have insufficient evidence regarding the relationships among Christianity, biblical law, Europe's tribal legal traditions, and Greek and Roman law. What we do know is that churches have come to accept the late arrival of institutions and traditions that they regard as essentially Christian, yet which cannot be found in the Bible. There is an acceptance of the idea that general biblical principles have produced specific institutional practices that seem to be Christian in their effects.

Conclusion

Paul in this passage sets forth the principle that a slave must honor his master. This makes it clear that Paul was not an abolitionist. He did not call for the abolition of this form of private property among the gentiles. In Philemon, he did ask for an owner to release his slave voluntarily, but there was no call for state action.

The Roman Empire in Paul's era was still supplying hordes of slaves through military conquests. This was not legal for Mosaic Is-

47. Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), ch. 10.

48. Norman F. Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works, and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Morrow, 1991).

rael, but it was legal for the gentiles. Foreign nations had supplied Israel with its slaves. There had been nothing wrong with this under Mosaic law. Paul did not challenge the Roman Empire's slave policy.

A slave is required to remain with his owner. An owner is not required to free his slaves unless they or their forefathers had been captured illegally. In the case of the West's system of chattel slavery after 1444, all of these slaves had been kidnapped. Their heirs were not lawfully enslaved, according to biblical law, both Old and New Testaments. Paul's teaching does not address this form of servitude. The example of the exodus does: the slaves had a right to escape an illegal, criminal slave system.

When Christianity gained control over the Roman Empire, the rules of warfare began to change. Large-scale military conquests had already ceased. When Christianity penetrated the world through foreign missions and diplomacy, Mosaic warfare—the extermination of civilians in nations that refused to surrender—was seen as no longer either legally binding or morally acceptable. Enslavement was no longer seen as a lawful form of evangelism, as it had been in Mosaic Israel because of the holy status of the land of Israel.

In the nineteenth century, the moral revulsion against slavery in abolitionist circles finally caught up with the biblical reality of slavery. The institution had been annulled in its Mosaic form, with its inter-generational non-Hebraic slavery (Lev. 25:44–46), by Christ's fulfillment of the jubilee year (Luke 4:18–19).[49] It had been made criminal in the New Testament era in the form of professional kidnapping.

This leaves biblically intact slave harvesting as a legitimate side-effect of war: enslavement rather than execution. This military ultimatum has been abandoned in modern times for many reasons, some military, such as reduced resistance by the enemy, and some economic, such as the profitability of renewed post-war economic trade between the victor nation and the defeated. After World War II, Japan and Germany became far richer through foreign trade than through their wartime military conquests, and the victors got richer by trade than by trying to extract reparations payments—the victors' failed experiment after World War I.

This view of slavery also leaves biblically intact the enslavement of convicted criminals who cannot afford to pay restitution to their victims. To repay the victims, he can lawfully be sold into lifetime slavery. His legal status as a slave does not affect his adult children.

49. North, *Treasure and Dominion*, ch. 6.

The child does not partake in the sins of the parent. "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (Deut. 24:16).

10

GODLY CONTENTMENT

> *Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.*
>
> I TIMOTHY 6:5–11

The theocentric principle here is God as the sovereign sanctions-bringer: point four of the biblical covenant.[1] God graciously supplies His people with whatever they need for the tasks at hand. He also supplies the tasks at hand, which is also grace.

A. Godliness

The Greek word translated here as "godliness" is *eusebia*. This Greek word appears more frequently in this epistle than in any other New Testament book. It can be translated as "piety," but that English word has become somewhat archaic. "Godliness" is more familiar.

1. To Be Like God

What does it mean to be godly? It means to be like God. This cannot mean to be like Him in terms of His omnipotence, omniscience,

1. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 4. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, 2010), ch. 4.

omnipresence, and His other incommunicable attributes. It means His moral perfection. This is commanded by the Bible, and not just once.

> Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5:48).

> For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth (Lev. 11:44).

> Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day (I Kings 8:61).

> And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine (Lev. 20:26).

> But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy (I Peter 1:15–16).

Perfection is the standard. Fallen man cannot attain this standard in history. But Christ's perfect humanity is imputed by God to each redeemed person at the time of redemption. God declares the sinner innocent, a judicial declaration based on Christ's moral perfection. Theologians call this transfer of Christ's moral perfection *definitive sanctification*. This judicial transfer of Christ's perfect humanity becomes the foundation of a life of striving toward perfection, which theologians call *progressive sanctification*. Both aspects of sanctification appear in one passage.

> Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, **not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith**: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. **Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect**: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:8–12).

2. John Murray on Sanctification and Law

Sanctification begins with definitive sanctification. I learned this theological principle in a class taught by John Murray at Westminster Seminary in the spring of 1964, which I audited. His tripartite division of sanctification into definitive, progressive, and final undergirds my approach to social theory as well as personal ethics.

Murray writes of sanctification that "it is a fact too frequently overlooked that in the New Testament the most characteristic terms that refer to sanctification are used, not of a process, but of a once-for-all definitive act. . . . When Paul, for example, addresses the believers at Corinth as the church of God, 'sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints' (I Cor. 1:2), and later in the same epistle reminds them that they were washed, sanctified, and justified (I Cor. 6:11), it is apparent that he co-ordinated their sanctification with effectual calling, with their identity as saints, with regeneration, and with justification."[2] The phrase "effectual calling" means regeneration offered by God's sovereign grace and applied by God's sovereign grace.

Sanctification begins with the covenantal death of the sinner: death to sin (Rom. 6:2).[3] "And the person who died to sin no longer lives in that sphere. His tie with it has been broken, and he has been translated into another realm."[4] Peter also taught the doctrine of *definitive death to sin* (I Peter 2:24; 4:1–2).[5] This is the doctrine that "those for whom Christ died vicariously are reckoned as having died in and with Christ, and, as Christ's death was death to sin once for all (cf. Rom. 6:10), so those dying with him die also to sin."[6]

To reckon is to count. God counts the now-redeemed person as having died to sin. The redeemed person is identified by God as having been resurrected with Christ.[7] This *judicial participation in Christ's resurrection* is not merely a progressive condition; it is also definitive. "And since Christ himself died once for all and, having risen from the dead, dies no more, it would appear necessary to restrict our death to sin and entrance upon newness of life (after the likeness of Jesus' resurrection) to the historic past where Jesus died and rose from the dead."[8] But this fact does not deny the truth of Romans 8:13. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."[9] Sanctification is also progressive. It will also be *final*, which will be revealed at the final judgment.[10]

Progressive sanctification is the outworking in history of definitive

2. *Collected Writings of John Murray*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: Banner of Trust, 1977), II, p. 277.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 278–79.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 279.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 280.
6. *Idem.*
7. *Ibid.*, p. 287.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 289.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 295.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 299–302; chap. 25.

sanctification. It is the result of God's special (saving) grace to the sinner. It is in no sense independent of grace. It is in no sense the result of man's autonomous works.

It is in this context of man as made in God's image that we should discuss godliness. Murray wrote: "...likeness to God is the ultimate pattern of sanctification. The reason why God himself is the pattern should be obvious: man is made in the image of God and nothing less than the image of God can define the restoration which redemption contemplates."[11] *Sanctification is a matter of being conformed to Christ's death and resurrection*. "When we think of sanctification as being patterned after the image of Christ, we must ask the question: How does it take place? As we think of definitive sanctification, we found already that this basically consists in union with Christ in his death and resurrection. And that simply means that we have been conformed to his death and resurrection."[12] Then what of progressive sanctification? "To a large extent the progress of sanctification is dependent upon the increasing understanding and appropriation of the implications of that identification with Christ in his death and resurrection. Nothing is more relevant to progressive sanctification than the reckoning of ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God through Jesus Christ (cf. Rom. 6:11)."[13] Retroactive reckoning is a lifelong process for covenant-keepers. It is not a one-time event.

This process of reckoning (counting, imputing) is not in any sense a denial of God's law. On the contrary, Murray said, this process affirms God's law. God's law and God's perfection are of one piece.

> The necessity of revelation defining the respects in which likeness to God prescribes the norm of sanctification, shows how consonant with the ultimate principle are the other considerations, that the law of God, the revealed will of God, and the example of our Lord are the criteria and patterns according to which sanctification proceeds. The law of God is the transcript of God's perfection; it is God's perfection coming to expression for the regulation of thought and conduct consonant with his holiness. As thus defined, the law of God guards the distinction of which we have spoken, because the law of God is the revealed will of God for us; it regulated our thought and behaviour in ways consonant with his perfection. And this is why every depreciation of the law of God as the pattern in terms of which sanctification is fashioned invariably leads to the adoption of patterns which impinge upon the unique prerogatives of God in the transcen-

11. *Ibid*., p. 306.
12. *Ibid*., p. 310.
13. *Ibid*., p. 311.

> dent and inimitable glory that belongs to him. There is one lawgiver. This belongs to the uniqueness in respect of which the attempt to be like God is blasphemy, and shows that whenever we do not appreciate the limitations prescribed by law, it is because we have failed to guard the differentiation that is correlative with the demand for likeness.[14]

This means that the imputation of Adam's sin[15] is overcome in history by the imputation of Christ's perfect humanity to disinherited sons of Adam. Murray discussed this transformation in relation to individual redemption and personal ethics. I extend this analysis to corporate entities: the sanctification of societies. The Great Commission applies to society as well as to souls.[16]

3. The Imitation of Christ

A godly man seeks to imitate God's moral character. Man is made in God's image, but because man is fallen, he reflects Satan, too. Man is to strive to be godly in order to reflect God better.

A man cannot become God. A man is always a creature. But a man can seek to imitate Christ's perfect humanity as a model of perfection. Paul wrote: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1).[17] Men inescapably must conform themselves to one of two models: Adam or Christ. Paul told the members of the church in Rome to avoid conforming themselves to the fallen world's model. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2).[18] The Greek word for "conform" implies "fashioning oneself." "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:14–16).

In this passage, two goals are listed: riches and godliness. Paul contrasts the two. In this, he follows Christ's distinction between God and mammon. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one,

14. *Ibid*., pp. 306–7.

15. John Murray, *The Imputation of Adam's Sin* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian & Reformed, [1959] 1979).

16. Kenneth L. Gentry, *The Greatness of the Great Commission: The Christian Enterprise in a Fallen World* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990).

17. Gary North, *Judgment and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), ch. 14.

18. Gary North, *Cooperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 8.

and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24).[19] Christ described the conflict between belief and unbelief, covenant-keeping and covenant-breaking, in terms of rival religions. One is the religion of God. The other is the religion of mammon. The context of His discussion was treasure. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6:19–20).[20]

Paul begins this section by describing an error: "supposing that gain is godliness" (v. 5). The Greek word for "gain" appears in the New Testament only in verses 5 and 6. It refers to acquiring things. It implies an increase.

This verse introduces a difficult issue of interpretation. The issue is the covenantal issue of sanctions. Specifically, it is the covenantal issue of predictable visible sanctions in history.

4. Visible Covenantal Sanctions

With respect to the corporate national covenant under the Mosaic covenant, Moses declared that there is a predictable relationship between corporate covenant-keeping and corporate success (Lev. 27:3–13; Deut. 28:1–14). This includes economic success.

> If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely (Lev. 26:3–5).[21]

> Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store (Deut. 28:4–5).[22]

> And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his

19. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 14.
20. *Ibid*., ch. 13.
21. Gary North, *Boundaries and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Leviticus*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1994] 2012), ch. 32.
22. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [199] 2012), ch. 69.

> season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow (Deut. 28:11–12).[23]

The moral issue here is corporate obedience to God's biblical law, i.e., walking in His statutes. Conformity corporately to God's law will produce corporate blessings, Moses said (Deut. 29).[24] There can be cases of poverty within the group, but, statistically speaking, there will be an increase in per capita wealth as a result of obedience.

Blessings are intended to reinforce covenant-keepers' faith in God's covenant, Moses wrote. "But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day" (Deut. 8:18).[25] These visible corporate blessings are supposed to build up men's faith in God as the sovereign sanctions-bringer. History is not random. Success is not random. The Bible teaches that covenant-keepers can safely regard God's covenantal sanctions as reliable. Obedience to God's law brings external, visible blessings.

This was not salvation by works. The Old Testament did not teach salvation by works. "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4). Then how were law and grace related? In the same way they are related in the New Covenant. There is a fundamental biblical principle: *grace precedes law*. God showed grace to Adam—the unmerited gift of life—before He laid down the law to Adam, both positive (Gen. 2:15) and negative (Gen. 2:17). He clothed Adam (Gen. 3:21) before He drove Adam out of the garden (Gen. 3:24). He delivered the Israelites from Egypt (Ex. 13–14) before He gave them the law (Ex. 20–23).[26] *Grace precedes law*. Therefore, we should regard positive sanctions for obedience to God's biblical law as the outworking of the grace of law. Men do not earn grace. Men also do not earn blessings irrespective of grace. Men respond in history to grace, either as covenant-keepers or covenant-breakers.

5. From Blessing to Presumption

Paul warns here against supposing that gain is godliness. He is establishing the context for his next point: "But godliness with con-

23. *Ibid.*, ch. 70.
24. *Ibid.*, ch. 71.
25. *Ibid.*, ch. 22.
26. North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), Parts 2, 3.

tentment is great gain." What is this context? The error of concluding from the *existence* of visible benefits that the *basis* of these benefits is godliness.

Most people make a common assumption: "I deserve the good things that happen to me." Good times are considered normal. They do not catch people's attention. When bad times come, there is far greater readiness for a person to search for the hidden cause than when good times prevail. People ask themselves: "What did I do wrong?" Successful people are not equally caught up in self-diagnosis: "What did I do right?" They assume that their success is the result of their godliness, or at least their basic goodness.

Paul warns against making the first assumption, i.e., "gain is godliness." Jesus warned against making the second assumption: "loss is unrighteousness." "And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John 9:1–3).

The covenant-keeper should begin his study of covenantal cause and effect with the cause, not the effect. What should interest him most is the obedience that brings positive sanctions, or the disobedience that brings negative sanctions. If he begins his study with the sanctions, he may become misled regarding the cause. This was David's error. He could not understand why covenant-breakers prospered. Psalm 73 is the consummate biblical example of the prosperity of evil-doers.[27]

> For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth (Ps. 73:3–9).

David then admitted that he had made a great mistake.

> When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How

27. Gary North, *Confidence and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Psalms* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 17.

> are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image (Ps. 73:16–20).

Solomon extended this theme. There is ethical cause and effect in history, but it takes time for this relationship to be manifested publicly.

> Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God (Eccl. 8:11–13).[28]

Sinners can prosper for a time. So, the correct assumption is this: more than one cause can produce gain. Similarly, more than one cause can produce loss. The covenantal relationship between ethics and temporal results is not unbreakable.

Obedience to God is the goal. Positive sanctions are the result. Men are supposed to focus on the goal of obedience to God, not the goal of positive sanctions from God. *Covenant-keeping is far more important than external blessings*, both in history and eternity. To honor God through obedience is more important than to gain blessings. God is more important than man.

The ability to obey God's law is itself a blessing. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8–10). *The grace to obey God is a more valuable asset than the temporal wealth that obedience brings*.

Paul says here that it is a great error to begin with the assumption that the presence of personal gain is sufficient evidence of God's favor. Paul does not deny that covenant-keeping produces gain. Rather, he is warning against making the convenient assumption that gain is produced only by covenant-keeping, i.e., godliness.

Paul does not reject Moses' teaching regarding the predictability between corporate covenant-breaking and corporate negative sanctions. This predictability remains statistically reliable, in a way similar

28. Gary North, A*utonomy and Stagnation: An Economic Commentary on Ecclesiastes* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 30.

to the connection between unsafe driving habits and an increased number of auto accidents. It sometimes takes a long time for the predictable relationship between behavior and results to become evident. Consider the Egyptians of the exodus generation. Their leader had long prospered by oppressing the Israelites. He would prosper no longer, nor would they.

With respect to individuals, predictability is less than in the case of corporate associations. This is analogous to insurance. What is statistically predictable for a group is not predictable for any particular individual who is part of the group. God may have a special purpose for an individual, e.g., the blind man healed by Jesus.

The covenant-breaker has a tendency to presume his own godliness as the basis of his gain. He is self-deceived. The visibly successful covenant-breaker who presumes his own godliness is destitute of the truth, Paul says.

6. Translators' Insertions

There is widespread agreement among modern translators that the Greek text is insufficient to convey the meaning of this passage. They add words to supply meaning. I disagree with this decision in this instance. So does the Alfred Marshall/J. B. Phillips *Interlinear Greek-English Testament* (Bagster, 1958), which is governed by the structure of the Greek text: "supposing gain to be the piety." I have accepted the Greek text as sufficient here. Paul is saying that those who make serious errors (vv. 4–5) also make this one: "Gain, in and of itself, is piety." Paul is not challenging the Mosaic viewpoint, namely, that corporate piety produces corporate gain. He is challenging men with corrupt minds who erroneously conclude that personal gain is equated with personal piety, i.e., that the existence of the former implies the existence of the latter.

Modern translators add three words: "a means of." The New American Standard reads: "suppose that godliness is a means of gain." This is also how the Revised Standard Version translates the text. The New International Version reads: "godliness is a means to financial gain." The New English Bible takes even greater liberties: "religion should yield dividends." The little-known translation by Charles Williams reads: "religion is only a means of great gain."[29] The least faithful to the text is J. B. Phillips: "hope to make some profit out of the Chris-

29. Charles B. Williams, *The New Testament: A Private Translation in the Language of the People* (Chicago: Moody, 1960), p. 468.

tian religion."[30] (Deprived of the Greek text on same page, Phillips could be quite imaginative.) This approach to the text misses Paul's point. Paul is not arguing that godliness is not a means of gain. Moses taught that corporate godliness is indeed a means of corporate gain. Paul is arguing against concluding from the existence of personal gain that one's piety or godliness is proven, i.e., that gain is godliness.

B. Contentment

"But godliness with contentment is great gain" (v. 6). This statement contrasts with the previous erroneous assumption: "gain is godliness." The Greek word for "contentment" appears twice in the New Testament, here and in II Corinthians 9:8: "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all **sufficiency** in all things, may abound to every good work." The root Greek word appears only once: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be **content**" (Phil. 4:11).[31]

Contentment with one's external circumstances is mandated by Paul. But contentment in well-doing is forbidden. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). "But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing" (II Thes. 3:13). "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain" (I Cor. 9:24). We can always do better. The question is: In what does *doing better* consist? Economics or ethics?

The worshipper of mammon selects the former answer: economics. He strives to do better economically. The error is best seen in Christ's warning, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).[32] In English literature, the most familiar representatives of this striving are Jacob Marley, before he became a ghost, and Ebenezer Scrooge, before his three spirit visitors arrived.[33]

30. J. B. Phillips, *The New Testament in Modern English* (New York: Macmillan, 1959), p. 454.

31. Gary North, *Ethics and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on the Epistles* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 23.

32. Gary North, *Trust and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Mark and John* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 11.

33. Charles Dickens' story, "A Christmas Carol," is a tale of secular redemption, or moralism. Moralism is self-redemption, and is as useless as mammon worship in the

1. Godliness Plus Contentment

Paul says here that the person who attains godliness has attained great gain, but only if godliness is accompanied with contentment. This raises a question regarding the completeness of godliness. If a person has godliness without contentment, then does he have godliness? The text indicates that he does. How else could Paul speak of contentment in addition to godliness, if contentment is somehow included in his definition of godliness? Paul is therefore saying that *there are degrees of godliness*. Some godly people are not content with their condition. They may be plagued with unfulfilled desires or doubts. Paul reminds such people that they must seek contentment with godliness.

Does Paul really dismiss everything else? Almost everything except food and clothing (v. 8). Godliness encompasses the broadest range of Christian living and service to God. To this, covenant-keepers should add contentment—satisfaction with their lives. There are no other things that are worth pursuing at the expense of godliness and contentment. "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (vv. 7–8). Birth to death encompasses a man's life. What matters, Paul is saying, is not what a person accumulates for use here on earth. If a person dies penniless but righteous, he has not departed from anything of value in the world to come. He cannot take anything with him anyway. Post-funeral question: "How much did he leave behind?" Answer: "All of it!"

Does this mean that there is total discontinuity between this life and the next? On the contrary, there is predictable continuity. Christ said: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19–21).[34] This continuity is based on a temporal transfer of capital: from this world to the next. We save in this world—forego the temporally beneficial use of an asset—in order to gain riches beyond the grave.

quest for salvation. Moralism is progressive sanctification without definitive sanctification. It is thwarted by original sin. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

34. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 13.

This exchange of temporal assets for eternal assets takes place only in history. This exchange must be made on the basis of faith. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

2. Bounded by History

Paul here is not speaking of the treasure that is laid up in heaven during one's life on earth. He is speaking only of earth-bound assets. We do not take treasure from history into eternity. We forego treasure in history in order to accumulate wealth in eternity. Christ taught that this exchange is made before death, not at death. "Sell that [which] ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:33–34).[35]

Next, Paul offers supplemental information. "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (v. 8). These assets are basic to contentment. Food and clothing keep us alive. They are means of life. If you are dying because you lack these economic assets, then you have a legitimate reason to be discontented, despite your godliness. So, "godliness, plus" means godliness, plus food and clothing.

Paul does not mention housing. I conclude from this omission that he must be talking about assets owned. Food and clothing are owned. There is also a need for shelter to sustain life, at least in winter and in bad climates. But shelter need not be owned in order for it to provide life and comfort. Shelter can be rented. Jesus owned no shelter. "And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Luke 9:58).[36] But Jesus did not lack anything significant. He had friends who provided Him with temporary shelter.

Paul is saying here that all of life on earth is temporary. Temporal existence is temporary. So, covenant-keepers should not be discontented with their lack of ownership of anything besides food, which they consume rapidly, and clothing, which they consume less rapidly. The fact that a man does not own much of anything should be no more disturbing than the fact that he does not own time; he merely leases it temporarily. In fact, his lack of goods should be much less

35. Gary North, *Treasure and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Luke*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 26.

36. *Ibid.*, ch. 19.

disturbing to him than his lack of time. "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12:20).[37]

Is Paul saying here that the lifestyle of a well-fed homeless person should be sufficient to provide a godly man with contentment? Yes. Put another way, a godly man should not seek anything to give him contentment beyond that which is provided by food and clothing. If he is homeless for God, he should be content.

C. Discontent

This is a radical view of the relationship between a man's external condition and his internal condition. Most people are discontented about many things. Their external conditions produce internal pain. Paul is saying clearly that a covenant-keeper has no legitimate excuse for this pain. The problem is not in the external environment; the problem is a person's lack of faith. The discontented person thinks that his life is being thwarted by circumstances. Paul is saying that circumstances are not what is thwarting a covenant-keeper's life. He said this elsewhere in no uncertain terms with respect to his own circumstances. I quoted this earlier. Once is not enough. The message meets resistance.

> Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not (II Cor. 11:24–31).

Was Paul saying that all of this pain was great gain? Yes. He was contented with his condition. "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11). These external circumstances were all aspects of his mission. He was getting his work done. Pain was the price of getting it done. Everything that is worth doing has a price, beginning with the

37. *Ibid*., ch. 24.

price that Christ paid on the cross. Men prefer lower prices to higher prices, but in a cursed world (Gen. 3:17–19), it is foolish to complain about the existence of scarcity, i.e., prices that must be paid. Prices specify economic trade-offs that must be made in human action.

This passage stands as a condemnation of most men throughout history. The limits of legitimate discontent—no food, no clothing—are very narrow. This is another way of saying that most men's faith in God is very limited. They do not trust God to provide them with the capital they need for the tasks at hand. They also have a higher assessment of what they deserve in life than is appropriate for fallen man. They deserve death. "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Life itself is grace: an unmerited gift from God.

D. Civilization and Its Discontents

If everyone sought nothing more than food and clothing, could there be modern civilization? The personal drive that is required in a cursed world to discover, finance, and build, thereby progressively overcome the curse of scarcity, would be absent if no one desired to gain anything more than food and clothing. Is Paul calling for primitivism? Is he calling for a collapse of the division of labor and the resulting collapse of society? If we take his words literally, the answer is yes. So, we would be wise to look more closely at what he says.

Paul was a teacher. To finance a teaching career requires income-producing capital of one's own or payment from others. It also requires leisure for students to attend lectures and do the required reading. Capital, fee-paying students, third-party donations, and leisure are not zero-price resources. Therefore, for an evangelist to do his work requires more than food and clothing. It requires the social division of labor.

1. Capital and Thrift

Society requires capital. This means that it requires thrift. Thrift involves the sacrifice of present consumption for the sake of future consumption. Thrift occurs because people look ahead to the possibility of gain. This gain is more than personal godliness. It is also more than food and clothing.

It takes thrift—the sacrifice of present consumption—to achieve influence for God. This thrift is a matter of time devoted to spiritual

exercises or study. Time is forfeited money. Time is an asset that has a price, namely, whatever the time-allocator could have earned through an alternative investment of his time. Time is the most precious of all human resources, for it is the only non-renewable resource that has no substitute.

Thrift is necessary for economic growth. Economic growth is necessary for the extension of God's kingdom in history. Without capital, there would be no book publishing, no e-mail, no radio, no television, or any of the other tools by which evangelists deliver the good news of Jesus Christ. There would also be no church buildings, no air conditioning, no indoor plumbing, no parking lots, and no mortgages.

All of these things are earth-bound. We are beneficiaries of them after we arrive, and our testaments leave them to our heirs after we have departed. Paul is correct about arrival and departure: these earth-bound assets are irrelevant to us. But, *in between*, they make a tremendous difference. They make a tremendous difference for personal godliness. They do make a difference for the *effects* of personal godliness. Jesus and the apostles occasionally delivered the good news to several thousand people at one time. A televangelist may deliver the good news to several million viewers, and do it again the following week. Tools extend our influence. They make us more productive. They enable us to achieve more than we could have achieved without them.

Wealth is not distributed equally. Some people are more productive than others. Some people possess capital in the broadest sense; others do not. Some people have more food than they need for life. Others face starvation.

2. Economic Growth

The history of Western civilization over the last quarter of a millennium has been the story of sustained economic growth. This began when the Industrial Revolution began. It was paralleled by the Agricultural Revolution. As the output of farmers grew, the price of food fell. More people could move to cities. They had to move; economic competition was too stiff in agriculture. In 1750, about 90% of Europeans and Americans worked in agriculture. In modern America, about 2% of the population works on the farms, and perhaps another 10% works in various agricultural support services. A similar expansion of output took place in clothing, as wool was replaced by cotton. Cotton is easier to wash than wool. It can be mass produced. So, in

the areas of food and clothing, increasing output brought cheaper food, more varieties of food, cheaper clothing, and more varieties of clothing to the common man in the West. Now this process is spreading to Asia.

Pareto's law tells us that 20% of the population will own 80% of the capital.[38] The rich will benefit first from the expansion of output. Yet rich people cannot consume significantly more of the basics than poor people do. If they eat too much, they get fat. Then they must spend more on dieting and exercise than they do on food. The major differences between the lifestyle of the very rich and the middle class are these: the ability of the rich to hire full-time servants; the amount of square footage they occupy at home; and their ability to quit working in the marketplace at any time and not change their lifestyle.

Rich people do not need to consume so large a percentage of their income as poor people do. So, they invest. This raises output even more. The way to sell this expanded output is by lowering prices. This makes poorer people wealthier. There is a trickle-down effect in capitalism. Over centuries, this trickle-down effect makes poor people vastly richer than poor people were two centuries earlier. Think of the world in 1800. It would barely be recognizable to us. We would starve if we were transported back in time and asked to make a living. We would be useless to most employers. But a farmer in 1500 would have recognized most of the implements of a farm in 1800. Not in 1900. Surely, not in 2000.

If we had to move back in time, it would be very difficult for us to learn how to become productive. Children took years to learn how to become productive in a society without much capital. But if a man from 1500 were brought into today's world, he could learn the basics fairly rapidly. Work on an assembly line can be learned fast. So can the skills of washing windows or mowing lawns, for which there is always demand. He would adjust and be able to earn enough money to feed and clothe himself within days—maybe hours. A cot in a garden shed, a few used blankets, bulk rice and beans bought at Sam's Club, with vegetables grown in a few square feet of pots, and a trip to the Good Will or Salvation Army to buy used clothes would give him a worker's lifestyle by the standards of 1500 or even 1800. Add running hot and cold water and electric lights. Then consider dentistry. Would he go back? I doubt it. Give him two years, and he would be

38. Richard Koch, *The 80/20 Principle: The Secret to Success by Achieving More With Less* (New York: Dell, 1999).

looking for a better job and complaining about no health insurance benefits. The question is: Would he be ready to move in with his girl friend without marrying her? If so, he would have completed the transition into the twenty-first century.

The story of a stone-age California Indian, named Ishi ("man") by anthropologist A. L. Kroeber, indicates just how fast primitive people can adjust to a world of enormous capital. Near starvation, he wandered into the town of Oroville in 1911. He was the last member of his tribe—or, possibly, a mixed-blood Indian in a tribe that had already died out, the Yahis.[39] He had been living just as tribe members had lived thousands of years earlier. He was brought to the University of California, Berkeley. He lived in the University's anthropology museum. He made arrowheads and other implements for the museum. He also learned how to ride the trolley. Flipping on an electric light was no more difficult for him than it was for anyone else. He adjusted to everything except the sight of large crowds at the beach. He died of tuberculosis in 1916.[40] Today, medical care would have saved his life. In contrast, a modern urban dweller, transported to the environment Ishi had lived in, would starve, just as Ishi almost did.

Capitalism has made food and clothing available to everyone in the West. Now it is making both available to the masses of Asia. Starvation is disappearing, except in sub-Sahara Africa, which remains despotic, demon-possessed, and anti-free market. But the price of this extension of food and clothing to the poorest people in society is the creation of vast pools of capital owned by an elite. Someone has to own it. Someone must make decisions as to how it should be used. Ownership is a social responsibility.[41] The free market is an institutional structure that imposes costs of misuse on owners, and defines "misuse" in terms of what customers want. Customers make their bids for the output of capital, raw materials, and labor. Those owners of capital who ignore what the highest-bidding customers have bid must forfeit income and wealth.

Capitalism has removed what Paul identified as legitimate causes of discontent: a lack of food and a lack of clothing. Without capitalism, there would be far fewer people and a larger percentage of legitimately discontented people.

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39. News Release (Feb. 5, 1996), University of California, Berkeley.

40. Theodora Kroeber, *Ishi in Two Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961).

41. Gary North, *An Introduction to Christian Economics* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1973), ch. 28.

Then there is the issue of inter-generational continuity. "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just" (Prov. 13:22). Inheritance is an aspect of righteousness, this proverb says. A *good* man leaves an inheritance. Did Paul reject this verse? Has the New Covenant abandoned the capitalist implications of the Old Covenant? "And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (Gen. 13:2).

The hermeneutical issue here is covenantal continuity. Does this passage break with the Old Covenant? Or was Paul trying to persuade Timothy of a concept distinct from the interrelated economic concepts of thrift, capital, wealth, inheritance, and dominion? To answer these two questions correctly, we must first consider the theoretical issue of why people act economically.

3. Discontentment: Micro and Macro

Ludwig von Mises began his epistemologically deductive economic theory with the observation that men act. He then asked: Why do they act? His answer was that men wish to exchange their present circumstances for a different set of circumstances. Mises saw human action as a constant exchange of conditions. Men seek to improve their conditions, he said. Mises began his economic theory with the axiom of human action, which he explained by means of the corollary of discontentment. Discontentment is the essence of the human condition, Mises taught.

> We call contentment or satisfaction that state of a human being which does not and cannot result in any action. Acting man is eager to substitute a more satisfactory state of affairs for a less satisfactory. His mind imagines conditions which suit him better, and his action aims at bringing about this desired state. The incentive that impels a man to act is always some uneasiness. A man perfectly content with the state of his affairs would have no incentive to change things. He would have neither wishes nor desires; he would be perfectly happy. He would not act; he would simply live free from care.[42]

Paul is not talking about this kind of micro-discontentment: the exchange of a marginal quantity of one good for a marginal quantity of another. These exchanges are basic to life. We do not attain something for nothing except by God's grace. Paul is talking about macro-discontentment: the exchange of one *lifestyle* for another. He is talking

42. Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action: A Treatise on Economics* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1949), p. 13.

about a man's attitude toward the conditions of his life that appear to be improvable only through the power of autonomous man, or impersonal fate, or impersonal chance, or some occult force. The discontented man sees his present condition as not worthwhile in the cosmic scheme of things or in his own personal scheme of things. He has judged his present condition, and has found it *beneath him*—beneath his dignity, his capabilities, his vision, or his well-deserved status. He is discontented because he does not believe that God's grace establishes his present condition. He thinks he can improve on God's grace.

The issue facing everyone is this: "What is my assigned task? What does God want me to do?" This is the continuing dilemma in every person's history. God commands perfection. God provides grace so that a covenant-keeper can make progress toward attaining the perfect humanity of Christ. This process begins with the judicial transfer of Christ's perfection to the covenant-keeper. *Grace precedes law.* Then, in full possession of salvation, the covenant-keeper begins to work it out. "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12).[43]

Paul is implying here, though not saying explicitly, that God provides the covenant-keeper with whatever is required in order for him to accomplish his assigned task. God may provide the capital in advance. He may provide it on the job. The point is, He does provide it. *Grace precedes law*. Godliness with contentment requires that we perceive that the available supply of resources will be provided by God to enable us to complete the task at hand. *The main problem is to assess correctly the task at hand, not to accumulate the capital necessary to complete it*. If we do not know what the task at hand is, sin will lead us to attempt to accumulate more capital than is necessary to complete the task on schedule—God's schedule.

This leads us to Paul's next point: the pursuit of riches.

E. The Pursuit of Riches

Paul moves from a brief reference to the minimal capital required for godly contentment—food and clothing (v. 8)—to a consideration of the pursuit of riches.

> But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

43. North, *Ethics and Dominion*, ch. 20.

> For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows (vv. 9–10).

The Greek words that begin this section, *hoi boulomenoi*, mean "those who will to be" or "desire to be."[44] Paul is speaking of seekers after riches, not people who are already rich. He speaks of the rich later in the chapter (vv. 17–19).[45] He says that those who seek to be rich are in serious risk of moral destruction. He lists a series of moral evils. In the Greek text, these are: temptation, snare, foolishness, injury, lusts, drowning, ruin, and destruction. The reference to drowning is graphic. This Greek word appears in the New Testament in one other place: "And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to **sink**" (Luke 5:7).

1. Covetousness

In the world of direct-response marketing, it is widely accepted by advertising copy writers that there are only two basic motivations for purchasing financial services: greed and fear. Greed is the more powerful appeal. Paul understood this dual motivation. He counters greed with fear. So great is the power of greed that Paul identifies it as a root of all evil. In the original Greek, the article "the" does not appear. The introductory part of this verse is better translated, "For a root of all evils is the love of money."[46] The Greek word translated as "love of money" is *philarguria*. It means "love of silver." Elsewhere, a closely related Greek word, *philarguros*, is translated as "covetous." "And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him" (Luke 16:14). "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy" (II Tim. 3:2). Its opposite, *aphilarguros*, means "not covetous." "Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous" (I Tim. 3:3). "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). The sense of "money" is present in the

44. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (eds.), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, by Walter Bauer, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 146.

45. Chapter 10.

46. Marshall and Phillips, *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*, p. 832.

word, for it refers to silver. Its meaning extends beyond the love of money to greed in general.

Paul speaks of people who "coveted after" money. The Greek word translated as "coveted" means "to desire." "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (I Tim. 3:1). "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:16). When it says they have erred from the faith it means "wandered away." They were sidetracked, in other words. They have also pierced themselves with pain, Paul says. These are self-inflicted wounds. This is graphic language. Paul is saying that God-fearing people have been deflected from the true faith and have injured themselves, all for the love of money. He is not speaking here of covenant-keepers in general. He has in mind specific people.

2. God or Mammon

Paul offers no reason for the conflict between Christian faith and the pursuit of riches. He does not have to. Christ made this conflict a matter of fundamental distinctions. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24).[47]

Christ had said that the issue is service. God demands service from all men. Mammon does, too. God is a personal being. Mammon is not. *Mammon is a principle of action, a way of life*. It is this-worldly. It is the great god More. It is man's insatiable desire to heap up more treasure in history. It is fallen man's illusion that what matters most is one's legacy in history. It is also the error that gain is godliness. The religion of mammon in action is best seen in Christ's parable of the barn-builder.

> And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou

47. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 14.

> hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God (Luke 12:16–21).[48]

Later in this chapter, Paul returns to this theme of being rich toward God (vv. 17–19). Christ told His listeners that God provides the capital necessary to fulfill the tasks at hand.

> And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Luke 12:22–34).

Christ was establishing a system of missionary finances.[49] He who would be a faithful missionary must not worry about funding. There are few missionaries who adopt this method of financing. China Inland Mission did, today called OMF International. Denominational foreign mission boards never do. There are few Christians who pursue the life of the missionary.

There are many who pursue riches. Christ made it as clear as possible that the attainment of true riches involves two things: trust in God regarding the availability of capital in history, and trust in the preservation of one's accumulated treasure in eternity.

This is the theological frame of reference for Paul's discussion of riches in this chapter. His discussion was an extension of what Solomon had taught a thousand years earlier.

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48. North, *Treasure and Dominion*, ch. 25.
49. *Ibid.*, ch. 25.

> He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity. When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes? The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep. There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand. As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand (Eccl. 5:10–15).

We bring nothing into this world, Solomon said,[50] and we shall take nothing out of it. Paul repeated this insight. Christ had also taken this doctrine and had amplified it. He showed that there is a way to store up riches in heaven, to be appropriated beyond the grave. This gave legitimate hope to men who recognized the truth of Solomon's warning:

> If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth [stillborn] is better than he. For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness. Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the other. Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place (Eccl. 6:3–6)?

The grave swallows up all men equally, Solomon taught. Their end is the same. Lacking further revelation, the Old Covenant was imprecise regarding eternity. Christ taught that eternity will not be the same for all mankind. There is judgment and meaning beyond this world. What a man does in the realm of history establishes his post-resurrection legacy to himself. The covenant-keeper therefore should act consistently in history with what he believes about eternity. He has faith in continuity: charitable giving in this life produces wealth for eternity. Doing with less in history means mansions in eternity. Christ said: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1–3).

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50. North, *Autonomy and Stagnation*, ch. 3.

Paul in this passage accepts the accuracy of Solomon's teaching regarding riches and their burden. He also extends Christ's warning that mammon is the essence of the alternative religious worldview to orthodoxy. In this brief section, Paul encapsulates the teaching of Solomon and Christ on the dangers of wealth.

3. Andrew Carnegie

Andrew Carnegie built the greatest steel company in history. When he sold it on New Year's Day, 1901, to investors who had just created United States Steel, J. P. Morgan, the banker who had put together the transaction, told him, "Mr. Carnegie, I want to congratulate you on being the richest man in the world." Carnegie's share of the sale gained him $300 million in bonds that paid five percent per annum. In today's money, $300 million would be in the range of $7 billion.[51] In 1901, there was no income tax.

Over the next two decades, he gave away 90% of his money. There is nothing like this story in the annals of modern capitalism.

In 1868, at the age of 33, he was earning $50,000 a year, the equivalent of well over a million after-tax dollars today. Two decades earlier, he had been a newly arrived immigrant pauper teenager who had to support his family. He had a gift for making money. In 1868, he wrote a memorandum to himself. It was discovered by his estate's executors half a century later. It had been preserved in a box of mementos. It included these observations.

> Man must have an idol—the amassing of wealth is one of the worst species of idolatry—no idol more debasing than the worship of money. Whatever I engage in I must push inordinately; therefore should I be careful to choose that life which will be the most elevating in character. To continue much longer overwhelmed by business cares and with most of my thoughts wholly upon the way to make more money in the shortest time, must degrade me beyond hope of permanent recovery. I will resign business at thirty-five, but during the ensuing two years I wish to spend the afternoons in receiving instruction and in reading systematically.[52]

For the next three decades, he pursued money instead. He built a company that served the world of industry well. Carnegie Steel found ways to cut costs and lower the price of steel. It produced fine prod-

51. In 2012, median household income in the United States was around $50,000.

52. Quoted in Robert L. Heilbroner, "Carnegie & Rockefeller" (1960); reprinted in *A Sense of History: The Best Writing from the Pages of American Heritage* (New York: Smithmark, [1985] 1995), p. 431.

ucts at low prices. This incessant competition led his competitors to put up the money and agree to the enormous debt to buy Carnegie Steel in 1901, in what turned out to be a vain hope of reducing competition. The free market continued to bring forth new competitors.

Carnegie then gave away most of his money, and in doing so, he became, along with the Rockefellers, father and son, the key builder of the world of non-profit, tax-exempt foundations, most of which have promoted the secular humanist vision that is sometimes called the New World Order. His anti-Christian outlook, which he had brought as a youth from Scotland, never left him. It passed into the non-profit foundations that he left behind. His bureaucratic heirs used his money to reshape the modern world along liberal humanist lines. In building his fortune, he was a social benefactor. In giving it away, he became arguably the most destructive private citizen in American history.

He had recognized as a young man the corrupting effects of the pursuit of great wealth. He resolved to break the habit. He failed. The pursuit of wealth ensnared him, even though he recognized the idolatrous nature of the pursuit, even though he recognized its appeal to man's base nature. Yet he benefitted the masses by the output of his soul-desiccating fixation on the accumulation of personal wealth.

He did not need any more money in 1868. He saw where he was headed. He told himself that he would not fall into the trap. But he did. His memorandum condemned his entrepreneurship posthumously. And yet, and yet . . . had he not succumbed to the siren call of riches, millions of steel users would have paid higher prices, or perhaps could not have purchased items at all because of their expense or even their non-existence. By lowering prices, he made it possible for manufacturers to find new ways to use steel to produce consumer goods. The producers did this because they could sell their output to customers. From an economic point of view, customers shouted to Carnegie for over three decades, "Serve us! Serve us! We will make you rich if you serve us." He did, and they did. He built an industrial monument to his own eternal condition: a steel plant's fiery furnace.

F. Unpursued Riches

Moses waxed eloquent about the corporate blessings of God. But how were men in the Old Covenant expected to attain such external blessings if they did not actively pursue them?

The answer should be obvious: covenant-keepers are to pursue

righteousness. One result of righteousness is wealth. Jesus affirmed this relationship. "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:31–33).5[53] The phrase, "all these things," must not be spiritualized away.

The question is one of priorities. Man's top priority should be righteousness or godliness. Wealth is given to God's people in order to reward them for good service. *Wealth is a success indicator*. It announces: "This is working. Do it again." It is also given to them as a capital base for further dominion. Finally, it is given to confirm the predictability and reliability of the covenant. "But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day" (Deut. 8:18).[54]

A dilemma has appeared: success indicators that deflect men from their original goal. Put in modern terminology, this is the dilemma that Max Weber called substantive rationalism vs. formal rationalism. It can also be described as ethics vs. efficiency. Here is an example. We tell a student to study hard, so that he can become well educated. We then set up a system of sanctions: grades. We find that some students "study for the test." They study in order to pass a test, not to master the material. And a few of them will cheat. The formal positive sanction—a high grade—competes with the substantive goal: education.

In every system of sanctions, we find this dualism. The sanctions may deflect men from their original goal. The Bible speaks of this dualism with respect to obedience. Do we obey the letter of the law or the spirit of the law? Paul wrote:

> Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: **for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life**. But if the min-

53. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 15.
54. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 22.

> istration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? (II Cor. 3:3–8)

The spirit of free enterprise is "serve the customer." The letter of free enterprise is "make a profit." If a business does not make a profit, it cannot serve the customer for long. But the focus of concern for business owners and their hired managers shifts from *long-run service* to the customer to *short-term profits*. This is the same type of dilemma that faces the student who wants to go to graduate school: he must get high grades, year by year. He can gain the long-term goal only by way of a series of short-term successes.

Paul does not tell Timothy to avoid serving people well. He tells him not to pursue riches. *The goal is always service*. However men measure successful ecclesiastical service—souls won, marriages saved, churches built, sermons preached, etc.—*there will always be a numerical indicator of success*. This indicator cannot include all of the aspects of godly service. It is merely a representative figure. Every accounting system has numbers. Every rating system has objective standards. These do not tell the whole story, but they tell that portion of the story for which performance is usually rewarded. So, some people—perhaps most people—perform in terms of the system of rewards and punishments, i.e., sanctions.

Paul warns Timothy not to be beguiled by the reward of money. Timothy is not to pursue riches. This lure is too strong for most men to resist. *Men shape their job performance and even their lives in terms of a reward that is inherently temporal*. The pursuit of riches is therefore a snare.

It is also a false god offering a false hope. Pareto's 80-20 law always reasserts itself. About 80% of the wealth will be owned by 20% of the population in any society. Furthermore, among all societies, 20% of them will own 80% of the world's wealth. Those people who pursue riches are pursuing a goal that has always been closed to the vast majority. They are sacrificing their lives on an altar of statistical futility.

Conclusion

The pursuit of riches is a spiritually dangerous pursuit. Far better, Paul advises, to pursue godliness. After a man attains godliness, his next goal should be contentment. This is defined simply by Paul:

satisfaction with food and clothing. A covenant-keeper who has food and clothing should be content.

This is a hard doctrine to accept. The cares of this world grow up and threaten to strangle us. Jesus warned: "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful" (Matt. 13:22).[55] The more wealth we have, the larger our number of options, and the more cares and responsibilities we have. Or, as Solomon put it: "When goods increase, they are increased that eat them" (Eccl. 5:11).[56] A large table attracts many diners.

Paul cautions against pursuing wealth. But he offers different advice for those who have already attained wealth, as we shall see in the next chapter.

55. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 28.

56. Gary North, *Autonomy and Stagnation*, ch. 19.

11

THE UNCERTAINTY OF RICHES

Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

I TIMOTHY 6:17–19, NASB

The theocentric focus of this passage is God's trustworthiness. This is a matter of service: hierarchy.[1] We serve that which we trust. God's trustworthiness is contrasted with the uncertainty of riches. Paul implicitly tells men to ask themselves: "In what should I trust?" That which is trustworthy is that which one serves faithfully in thankfulness of past support and expectation of future support. In human affairs, support is two-way: the division of labor. Not so in the relationship between God and His creation. God is not dependent on anything else.

A. Laying Up Treasure

Paul tells Timothy to instruct[2] rich people. Timothy is to present a message regarding their special moral obligations to others. Why should rich people be singled out? Because their wealth is accompanied by unique moral risks and obligations. The biblical principle here is this: from him to whom much has been given, much is expected (Luke 12:48).[3]

1. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 2. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, [1980] 2010), ch. 2.

2. The Greek word can also be translated "command."

3. Gary North, *Treasure and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Luke*, 2nd ed.

1. Laying Up Assets

I began this chapter with the text in the New American Standard Bible. This is the first time in 39 years that I have begun a chapter in this commentary series with anything but a citation from the King James Version. This is because the King James translators missed the point of this text. Paul recommends here that rich people lay up, meaning to accumulate assets. He is not referring here to the accumulation of invisible wealth to be personally appropriated beyond the grave. He speaks here of *laying up a good foundation in history*. The King James translators wrote: "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (v. 19). The Greek text does not convey the sense of "against." The Greek text does not contrast history—the time of laying up—with final judgment. The Greek word translated "against" is *eis*, meaning (among many things) "to" or "for." In this context, it means "for the future."[4] The Greek word translated as "eternal," *ontose*, is the word for "real" or "true." The New American Standard Bible translates the passage more closely to the original Greek: "Storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed."

We take hold of eternal life while we are in history. John the Baptist said: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). He who trusts Christ in history attains eternal salvation in history. He who refuses to trust Christ in history seals his doom for eternity. A person in inescapably takes hold of one or the other of these eternal conditions. There is no third option.

Question: "Why should a self-interested rich man be generous to others?" Answer: "To lay up a good foundation for the future." The Greek word for "future" does not refer exclusively to eternity. The Greek word translated as "time to come" is *mello*, which refers to the future in general. This need not be eternity, although this Greek word occasionally appears in the context of eternity. "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world **to come**" (Matt. 12:32).

(Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 28.

4. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (eds.), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, by Walter Bauer, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 228 (2b).

The contrast Matthew 12:32 is explicit: this world (*aion*) vs. the world to come. This is not the contrast in I Timothy 6:19. The word *mello* refers to history, as in the following cases: "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself **would come**" (Luke 10:1). "When Jesus therefore perceived that they **would come** and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone" (John 6:15). "Who seeing Peter and John **about to go** into the temple asked an alms" (Acts 3:3). Laying hold of true life is the same process as working out one's salvation (Phil. 2:12). It is a matter of progressive sanctification.[5]

2. The Uncertainty of Time

Timothy's message is in the form of a commandment: do not trust in the uncertainty of riches. The Greek text says: "uncertainty of riches," not "uncertain riches." The King James Version has it wrong: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (v. 17). The Greek text does not imply that some kinds of riches are uncertain, while other kinds of riches are certain. It implies that *riches in general* are uncertain. Paul has to be speaking here of *riches in history*, for Christ taught that riches in eternity are certain.

Why is uncertainty associated with riches? Because riches are temporally bound. They are part of history. History is subject to a curse because of Adam's sin (Gen. 3:17–19).[6] Aspects of this curse include physical decay and death. Man's environment thwarts his productivity. In addition, God works in history deliberately to create uncertainty for successful people. Hannah's song of rejoicing announced a great reversal of conditions.

> Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up (I Sam. 2:3–7).[7]

5. Chapter 10:A:2.

6. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1982] 2012), ch. 12.

7. Gary North, *Disobedience and Defeat: An Economic Commentary on the Historical*

Uncertainty is an aspect of all marketable (exchangeable) assets in history. These assets rise and fall in value. They are not trustworthy.

A characteristic feature of earthly riches is their transferability. In contrast, the gift of eternal life is inalienable. It cannot be purchased. It is a free gift of God. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). Eternal life therefore cannot be sold. Paul knew this when he wrote, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:3). This exchange of eternal conditions is not possible. Eternal life is the unique, nontransferable possession of the recipient. Eternal life is certain. Paul insisted on the certainty of God's grace.

> For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:38–39).

> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved (Eph. 1:3–6).

Because eternal life is received by grace through faith during history, *there is continuity between history and eternity*. The same continuity applies to eternal death. The discontinuity between eternal life and eternal death begins in history (John 3:36). Because of the judicial continuity between history and eternity, a covenant-keeper in history can accumulate assets that are immediately put on deposit for him for his use in eternity.

Eternal assets are not subject to uncertainty, for they are located beyond history. This contrast in both the location and the certainty of riches was taught by Christ. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6:19–20).[8] Christ referred here

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Books (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 12.

8. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 13.

to losses that result from physical decay. A moth eats fine clothing. Rust erodes the productivity of tools. In short, *things wear out*. This is because the world itself is wearing out. The world is under a curse.

> For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body (Rom. 8:20–23).[9]

This historical curse is not without grace. No curse in history is ever without grace.[10] By God's grace, the cosmic erosion process is offset and even overcome in limited areas. Moses reminded the generation of the conquest, "Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years" (Deut. 8:4).[11] The decay associated with entropy—the disorderly outcome of the second law of thermodynamics—is common, but it is not universal.[12] For example, in a future era before the final judgment, the shortening of men's life expectancy that took place after Noah's Flood will be reversed. "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed" (Isa. 65:20).[13] We are already seeing this reversal in our day. Except in what used to be the Soviet Union (1917–1991), average life expectancy—not considering war—steadily increased worldwide during the twentieth century.[14] The distribution of long life, unlike the distribution of marketable wealth, is becoming closer to an egalitarian standard. A typical poor man is far more likely to attain 80 percent of a rich man's life expectancy than 80 percent of a rich man's net worth.

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9. Gary North, *Cooperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 4.

10. Gary North, *Dominion and Common Grace: The Biblical Basis of Progress* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987), ch. 1.

11. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 18.

12. Gary North, *Is the World Running Down? Crisis in the Christian Worldview* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1988).

13. Gary North, *Restoration and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on the Prophets* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 15. Cf. Gary North, *Millennialism and Social Theory* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), ch. 5.

14. This may not be true in sub-Sahara Africa, where AIDS is a pandemic. Accurate population statistics for sub-Sahara Africa do not exist.

Because of the inescapable impermanence of this cursed world, he who devotes his life to accumulating treasure that can be used only in this world is a fool. He ignores both his own mortality and the mortality of this world apart from God's grace. One more time:

> And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God (Luke 12:16–21).[15]

This is foolish. "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." This principle of holy giving is Paul's starting point. The idea of "rich toward God" is the same as "rich in good works." God does not need our money. We cannot write Him a check. He does not accept credit cards. We are being rich toward God whenever we use our wealth to benefit others, who are made in God's image (Matt. 25:31–40). We are also rich toward God when we sacrifice a portion of our time and wealth in order to heal His creation as His stewards. Example: "If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones, or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young: But thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days" (Deut. 22:6–7).[16]

Laying up treasure in eternity is legitimate, Christ taught. He taught that covenant-keepers should lay up treasure in eternity by distributing treasure charitably in history. They forfeit present wealth in expectation of eternal wealth. This is the economist's definition of thrift: *the exchange of present assets in expectation of gaining future assets of greater value*. The expected payoff for Christ's recommended exchange comes beyond the grave. The covenant-keeper exchanges assets that are subject to uncertainty for assets that are permanent in value. It takes faith to believe this, for the transfer appears to be exclusively historical: exchanging an uncertain condition (riches) for an even

15. North, *Treasure and Dominion*, ch. 25.
16. See North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 53.

more uncertain condition (fewer riches). This is why the exchange is a test of faith. In whose word does a person trust: man's or Christ's?

Skeptics and would-be humorists use the phrase, "Jesus saves," as if this meant opening a bank savings account. "Jesus saves; Moses invests," is one such phrase. Nevertheless, the idea that Jesus saves in an economic sense is accurate. In fact, men's salvation rests solely on this fact. *God Himself exchanged wealth for poverty*. He did this in order to exchange poverty in history for wealth in eternity. Paul wrote:

> Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:5–12).[17]

Christ's exchange of eternity for history led to His exaltation in eternity. In His divinity, the Second Person of the Trinity took on humanity by entering into history: the incarnation. This led to His exaltation in eternity in his capacity as perfect man. Christ's exchange of conditions is the sole basis of any person's salvation. Christians by God's grace receive Christ's perfect humanity as a gift in history: *definitive sanctification*. Christians do not become divine; rather, they attain the moral status of Christ's perfect humanity through their faith in the unique saving work of Christ. Therefore, Paul concluded, covenant-keepers are supposed to work out the salvation that is already theirs: *progressive sanctification*.[18]

Christ identified *physical insecurity*—moth, rust, and theft—as the characteristic feature of *time-bound treasure*. He said that treasure in heaven is not subject to uncertainty. Christ taught that riches are uncertain because of the uncertainty associated with time-bound capital assets. He listed physical uncertainties as examples, but uncertainty is more than physical. It is also economic.

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17. Gary North, *Ethics and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on the Epistles* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 20.

18. Chapter 10:A:2.

B. Inescapable Future Uncertainties

1. Conditions Change, Wealth Changes

When conditions change, wealth changes. That which had been very valuable before can become worthless. "And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver" (II Kings 6:25).[19] "Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria" (II Kings 7:1). Elisha was forecasting a change in comparative military strength by predicting changes in the array of prices. History is constantly changing. Therefore, wealth is constantly changing.

To understand why wealth changes, it is necessary first to understand cause and effect in both economic value and prices. Changes in prices appear to be the source of economic uncertainty, but this is an illusion based on faulty economic analysis. Prices change because (1) objective external circumstances change, or (2) people's subjective values change, or (3) the interaction changes between the changing objective external circumstances and people's changing subjective values.[20] Objective prices change in response to changes in people's subjective assessment of changes in objective conditions. It is through changes in prices that men overcome some of life's uncertainties. This is why any system of mandatory pricing that is imposed by the civil government increases uncertainty. Price and wage controls, far from being a stabilizing influence, create disorder.

2. The Customer's Final Economic Authority

A major aspect of Christian economics ought to be the doctrine of imputation. With respect to God, imputation means God's declaration of some condition. He declares what the condition is, and this declaration is perfect. There is perfect correspondence between God's subjective declaration and the creation's objective condition. Chapter one of Genesis is the model of imputation: the repetition of the phrase, "it was good."

Modern economic theory (post-1870) begins with the doctrine of each individual's subjective imputation of economic value: method-

19. North, *Disobedience and Defeat*, ch. 26.

20. On modern economics' theories of subjective value and objective value, see Appendix B.

ological individualism and methodological subjectivism. In contrast, Christian economics must build its theory of economic value on the theological foundation of the related doctrines of *God's subjective imputation* and therefore *objective economic value*: methodological Trinitarianism and methodological subjectivism/objectivism. Only then can it establish a valid concept of men's imputation of economic value. Men are made in God's image, so a man possesses the ability both to assess and declare an asset's value to him. What distinguishes Christian economist's theory of value from modern humanistic economics' theory of value is the doctrine of God's imputation: *an authoritative subjective declaration of an objective condition*.

Modern economics has formally adopted a purely subjectivist epistemology. It teaches that economic value is imputed by individual customers who own assets that they are willing to exchange in order to gain the use or ownership of other assets. Individual customers make decisions to buy or not to buy, meaning to exchange or not to exchange. Individual sellers compete against each other to make a sale. Through supply and demand—buyers vs. buyers, sellers vs. sellers—objective prices for scarce economic resources are established in a free market. *Competing subjective values produce competing objective bids*. The result of these competitive bids is an array of objective prices.

As we have seen in the case of Samaria's array of prices, when objective external conditions change, customers' subjective imputations of economic value also change. This means that their subjective ranking of economic value changes, which means that their objective bids change, which means that objective prices change.

In a high division of labor economy, *customers possess money*, which is best defined as *the most marketable commodity*.[21] Customers impute present value to the array of available products and services. Then, through competition with each other in a free market that is open to all would-be bidders, they establish *objective money prices* for goods and services.

A free market economy is a gigantic auction. In an auction, the high bid wins unless the auctioneer has previously announced a minimum price, which no high bid reaches. In a free market, the high bid wins unless charity is involved. In most markets most of the time,

21. Ludwig von Mises, *The Theory of Money and Credit*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), pt. I, ch. 1, sec. 2: "The Origin of Money." The first edition was published in 1912.

charity is not involved. The larger the market, the less personal is the relationship between buyer and seller. The less personal the relationship is, the less likelihood that a transaction will contain an element of charity, either for the buyer or the seller.

The observable fact that the high bid wins has been central to economic theory ever since the publication of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* in 1776. The principle of "high bid wins" is an implication of the assumption of individual self-interest as the dominant factor in economic action. From Smith to the present, *individual self-interest* has been regarded as the dominant motivational factor in economic action. Without this assumption and without confirmation by the facts of economic life, economics would be a very different social science.[22]

Modern economics has argued that customers impute economic value to scarce goods and services, thereby establishing their market value. Suppliers allocate scarce resources so as to maximize their own income (except when charity is involved). They pay close attention to what they believe buyers will pay for the suppliers' output. This is why, ultimately, customers determine economic value.[23]

Because customers possess the most marketable commodity, money, they possess final *economic* authority over pricing. They make competitive bids against each other. These bids, which are based on individual subjective valuations, produce objective prices for specific goods and services.

Sellers announce prices of whatever they offer for sale, but these prices are *fiduciary prices*, i.e., prices set by sellers so that their inventories will be maintained until the expected highest-bidding customers show up and buy. This means that sellers act as *economic agents* of high-bidding customers. Sellers directly impose demand in the market only in their capacity as people who legally retain ownership of assets. This is sometimes called *reservation demand*.[24] Would-be customers make bids, but some sellers say "no." Those who say "no" are exercising reservation demand.

What influence does a seller have over pricing? Very little. He can announce a price, but this is not the same as making a sale, any more than an auctioneer establishes the price when he asks for a specific initial bid. When an auctioneer asks, "Do I hear. . . . ?" he reveals the

22. Appendix C:B.

23. Of course, God establishes final value. I am speaking here of value in the market. On God as imputer of economic value, see Appendix B.

24. Murray N. Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State: A Treatise on Economic Principles*, 2nd ed. (Auburn, Alabama: Mises Institute, [1962] 2009), p. 253.

nature of the pricing process. The free market is a giant auction. If there is no bid, there is no sale.

Because customers possess the most marketable commodity, money, they are in a much stronger bargaining position than sellers. Because they possess money, they possess far more alternatives than sellers do. An individual buyer faces a much larger audience of competing suppliers (buyers of money) than a seller faces (buyers of specific goods). The highest bidding customers establish final sale prices. Sellers make sales only by agreeing to the prices set by the most competitive buyers.

A seller can legally decide not to sell. By reducing the available supply, his decision to avoid selling affects the market price of competing assets to some degree, but this influence usually is so minimal as to be barely detectable. In a rare case when a seller keeps the asset for personal use by refusing to sell, he thereby becomes the highest-bidding final customer. This may be a major factor in the supply of certain unique forms of labor, such as a star athlete or entertainer, who buys leisure ("free" time)[25] by refusing to perform. But the more replaceable a particular service, the less influence over price a supplier possesses.

3. Value Is Uncertain

Economic value is uncertain in a world of unpredictable change. The less predictable the world is, the more uncertain economic value is. This means that temporal riches are uncertain. This is because men are not God. They cannot know the future perfectly. They do not know which changes are coming. Their wealth is therefore subject to uncertainty. To trust in riches is to trust in one's ability to forecast the future accurately and also to deal with it profitably. The more a man trusts in his own riches, the more he assumes his possession of God's incommunicable attribute of perfect foreknowledge. No man knows the future perfectly, Paul taught.

> Charity [agápé] never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

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25. Time is never free. The cost of a unit of time is the value to the owner of the most important use foregone.

> For now **we see through a glass, darkly**; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity (I Cor. 13:8–13).

Because perfect foreknowledge is not given to men, a wise man substitutes faith in the outworking of love (charity) for faith in riches. Or, as Paul has already announced to Timothy, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love [*agápé*], patience, meekness" (6:10–11).[26]

Paul tells Timothy to tell rich people not to be highminded. This is another word for "proud." The rich man is tempted to trust in his wealth, which ultimately means trust in his own forecasting ability and also his entrepreneurial skills necessary to deal with the future profitably. The rich man may regard himself as beyond the common conditions that afflict humanity, at least those afflictions that are related to wealth rather than common humanity, such as incurable disease. This is another way of saying that *a rich man thinks that he can buy his way out of almost any problem*. Solutions usually have price tags attached to them, he believes; he believes that he can afford to pay the price to evade most problems. So, he regards himself as above the uncertainties that beset the common man. The rich man trusts in riches, which are of uncertain future value. This is a mistake, Paul teaches.

C. A Diversified Portfolio

Paul contrasts trust in temporal riches with trust in the living God. Nothing is uncertain to God. Nothing is beyond God's decree: "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan. 4:35). Following Christ's teaching, Paul teaches that a rich covenant-keeper should be willing to affirm his trust in God (I Tim. 6:17) by turning loose of a portion of his capital (v. 18). A rich covenant-keeper should *turn loose* of a portion of his assets (v. 18) in order to *take hold* of true life (v. 19). This is an economic application of Christ's general principle: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is

26. Chapter 10.

a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:25–26).[27]

Paul does not here discuss treasure in heaven. He does not argue, as Christ argued, that a covenant-keeper's surrender of economic assets in history is his means of accumulating permanent assets in eternity. Paul speaks of two things: a superior form of trust and additional temporal riches.

Paul says that rich men should be willing to communicate. The meaning of this word has changed since 1611. It means to be generous or to share. The Greek word translated as "communicate" appears only in this verse: *koinonikous*. A parallel Greek root word, itself related to *koinonos*, sometimes refers to common ownership. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common" (Acts 2:44). Another related root word refers to a partnership. "If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself" (Phm. 1:17). The idea here is *shared corporate life*. This implies shared trials and tribulations. The rich man can reduce the tribulations of the poor man by sharing a portion of his wealth with him. The rich man suffers a loss, while the poor man enjoys a gain. This principle of sharing is what Paul taught to the Corinthians.

> But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever (II Cor. 9:6–9).

Sowing bountifully produces a positive sanction: reaping bountifully. Paul reminded the Corinthians of the source of all temporal wealth: God, who "is able to make all grace abound toward you" (v. 8). Paul makes the same identification to Timothy: God, "who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (v. 17). God provides our capital. God's inventory of capital is unlimited. Paul speaks here of temporal wealth. He is not comparing temporal wealth with eternal wealth.

It takes faith to believe that there is an open-ended supply of wealth for covenant-keepers in history, despite the fact of scarcity. It takes very great faith. It takes such great faith that very few covenant-keepers believe it—not the poor, who strive to be rich; not the

27. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 35.

rich, who fear becoming poor. This is why Paul instructs Timothy to deliver the truth about riches to both rich and poor.

Paul warns the rich and the poor not to be deceived by riches. Solomon had delivered a similar message a thousand years earlier. "Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain" (Prov. 30:8–9).[28] Solomon, one of the richest men in history, affirmed the desirability of a middle-class income and lifestyle. Middle-class income is a middle path between thievery and pride.

Paul describes this pathway as separating covetousness from pride. Nevertheless, Paul does not recommend middle-class living in this epistle. His words are directed exclusively to the poor and the rich. He is concerned with their souls, not with their income. He does not have in mind Solomon's prayer. He says to avoid striving after riches, and, for those who have already attained riches, he recommends a systematic reduction of present wealth. He does not recommend a program of giving away wealth as a means of attaining a middle-class life style. He presents a different program: *the attainment of greater security in history by abandoning all trust in riches*. In no way is this a revision of the Old Covenant. "He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch" (Prov. 11:28).[29] Paul recommends to rich men and poor men the same distrustful attitude toward riches. Like a dietician who prescribes the same diet for thin people and fat people, so is Paul with respect to riches. There is *greater spiritual security* in avoiding the quest for riches, he tells the poor man, and *greater economic security* by giving money away, he tells the rich man.

Riches that are beyond uncertainty are exclusively eternal. Christ made this point clear. Paul is not promising certainty in a world of inherently unpredictable change. But he is promising *increased certainty* for both the rich and the poor. The rich man normally seeks increased certainty by increasing his riches. So does the poor man. This is a mistake, Paul teaches. Uncertainty of temporal riches is inescapable, for loss-producing changes in history are inevitable. In a world of sin and death, such losses can be life-threatening. The rich man believes that by piling up riches, he can reduce this uncertainty. So does the poor man.

A rich man possesses sufficient wealth to enable him to seek a diver-

28. Gary North, *Wisdom and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Proverbs*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2007] 2012), ch. 86.

29. *Ibid.*, ch. 33.

sified portfolio of temporal assets that are subject to different types of uncertainty. He diversifies his portfolio on the assumption that when the market price of one asset falls, the market price of another asset may rise. Paul tells the rich man that increased certainty is attained by re-allocating a portion of one's portfolio out of marketable assets and into *nonmarketable assets*, namely, the blessings of God. These blessings are nonmarketable because (1) would-be buyers do not believe in the existence of such assets, and (2) God would not honor the sale. A claim on God's uncertainty-reducing blessings is established by turning loose of a portion of one's wealth in faith.

This strategy of reducing uncertainty by turning loose of money is available both to rich and poor, although Paul does not say this explicitly regarding the poor. Christ did. Christ gave the example of the poor widow. "And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had" (Luke 21:1–4).[30] The rich men gave away more money than the widow, but what they gave was a small portion of their wealth. The widow did not seek increased security through thrift and capital accumulation. She knew that in her circumstances, faithfulness to God was the only way to security. She could not reasonably expect to accumulate a diversified portfolio large enough to protect her. *Faithful giving results in God's protection.* She saw clearly what the rich men did not: uncertainty afflicts all marketable riches. She trusted God, whose favor is nonmarketable. The outward manifestation of her trust was her surrender of all of her money, which she knew was insufficient to provide security. Her poverty opened her eyes to the truth about riches: they are uncertain.

D. Christian Community and Anonymous Charity

Paul teaches here that faithful giving to the poor *communicates*, i.e., creates community. Wealth transferred to the poor reduces immediate worry by the poor. The Christian community is protected against severe uncertainties because those members with greater wealth use their wealth to relieve the poor members. *This is a system of voluntary insurance*. Where it differs from an insurance policy is in the absence of

30. North, *Treasure and Dominion*, ch. 50.

any legal obligation. There is no contract. There is no statistical analysis of risk. The community benefits from a reduction in uncertainty despite the fact that *uncertainty is not risk*, i.e., it cannot be successfully dealt with through insurance contracts. Insurance applies only to classes of events that are governed by known statistical probability, i.e., the law of large numbers. Uncertainty is not part of an insurable class of events.[31] In any case, the poor cannot afford to buy insurance. For them, risk might as well be uncertainty.

Christians might be tempted to argue that a public example of a charitable rich man today can serve as a model for rich men in the future. His example will be imitated. This in turn should lead to greater trust by the poor in the generosity of the rich. But this is not what Paul teaches. Paul teaches men to trust in God, not in the charity of the rich. Then there is the whole question of becoming an example. Christ specifically warned Christians against becoming a public example of charitable giving.

> Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly (Matt. 6:1–4).[32]

The covenant-keeping poor are supposed to trust in God, not in the covenant-keeping charitable rich. Given the existence of widespread resistance by the rich to Paul's teaching on charitable giving, this is a wise policy on the part of the poor.

Elsewhere, Paul recommended the creation of a community in which no one suffers from the crippling effects of poverty. The context of his remarks was the year-old promise of the Corinthian church to send money to the hard-pressed Jerusalem church.

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31. Economists distinguish between uncertainty and risk. Risk can be dealt with through insurance because a particular event is part of a larger class of similar events. Money to insure people against risky events can be pooled in order to reduce the heavy burden of an individual event on any one participant in the pool. In contrast, an uncertain event is beyond statistical analysis. It is not subject to "the law of large numbers." There is no commercial insurance for it. See Frank H. Knight, *Risk, Uncertainty and Profit* (Boston: Houghtin Mifflin, 1921); Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action: A Treatise on Economics* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1949), ch. 6.

32. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 11.

> I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness [earnestness] of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward [have begun] a year ago. Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: As it is written, **He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack** (II Cor. 8:8–15).[33]

In support of his view, Paul cited Exodus 16: the first appearance of the manna in the wilderness. What was manna?

> And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat. This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did mete it with an omer, **he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack**; they gathered every man according to his eating (Ex. 16:14–18).

God gave the Israelites free food, so that they would learn to trust Him in times of crisis. The predictability of the manna's miraculous daily appearance, except on the sabbath, was designed to produce confidence in God. The double portion of manna on the day before the sabbath (v. 22) was a weekly miracle that was also supposed to produce confidence in God. The miracle of the manna had an element of continuity (five days) and an element of discontinuity (double portion on day six, followed by no manna), both of which were to increase the Israelites' trust in God.[34]

Paul sought to persuade the Corinthians that *the church international is the equivalent of manna*. This principle of reliable aid from

33. Gary North, *Ethics and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on the Epistles* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), chaps. 5, 6.

34. Gary North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), Part 1, *Representation and Dominion* (1985), ch. 18.

God was applied by Paul to the comparative wealth of the church in Corinth vs. the church in Jerusalem. The comparative wealth of the members of the two congregations established a moral obligation on the part of the Corinthians. This was not an intra-congregational comparison, but an inter-congregational comparison. By implication, this moral obligation can become intra-congregational, but Paul did not formally draw this conclusion.

By giving money quietly to his local congregation and also to charitable organizations, the rich man can avoid the public display of charitable giving that Christ warned against. He can retain his anonymity. At the same time, the poor are assisted. The poor can then better escape the lust for riches that afflicts poor people who see no way out of their many uncertainties other than gaining wealth. They can more confidently trust in God. Their faith can be placed in the Christian community, not just in near-miraculous interventions by God into their circumstances.

The continuity of faith-based community is preferable to the discontinuity of miracles. This was equally true under Moses. The primary goal of the manna was to create faith in God, but the manna ceased when the Israelites entered the Promised Land. "And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year" (Josh. 5:12). So it is to be in the New Covenant: *the substitution of covenant community for miracles*.

This strategy of relying on community over miracles is not always applicable to foreign missions. In extensively occult cultural environments, the discontinuity of miracles is sometimes necessary to deal with entrenched demonism. Metaphorically speaking, the Christians' serpents must publicly destroy the magicians' serpents. The Christian foreign missionary may need to discipline himself to rely on what appears to be uncertain financing as a means of strengthening his faith in God in an uncertain environment. This has been the approach to financing by the OMF International, which used to be called the China Inland Mission, founded by Hudson Taylor in the late nineteenth century. There is no guaranteed salary to the OMF missionary in the field.

E. Harnessing Greed

Paul stresses in this passage the importance of charitable giving: "That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distrib-

ute, willing to communicate." There is a positive sanction promised to the giver: "storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they make take hold of that which is life indeed" (NASB). There is *temporal self-interest*. Christ had said the same thing with respect to eternal self-interest. "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6:20).[35]

What is missing in the New Testament is the customer-service perspective of Adam Smith and the right-wing Enlightenment's tradition of economic analysis. We do not find any indication in the New Testament that by serving customers efficiently, a producer can get rich. This was Smith's revolutionary insight: through *capital accumulation*, a businessman serves his own self-interest, as well as his employees' self-interest and customers' self-interest.

The Old Testament is clear that corporate covenantal obedience to God produces corporate economic success. Personal obedience to God includes charity (Deut. 15:1–10).[36] The covenant-keeper must work hard (Prov. 6:6–11). He should not seek to get rich (Prov. 30:8–9).[37] Riches may come, as they came to Abraham, but becoming wealthy is not a biblical goal. In fact, in Western ethical theory generally, from classical Greek philosophy to the Enlightenment, the quest for personal riches was regarded as an affliction of a morally flawed character.

There is one hint in the Bible that a man's accumulation of capital is a means for him to serve others by giving them employment. This is Jesus' parable of the farmer and the hired hourly workers (Matt. 20:1–16). In this parable, the highest wage per hour went to those few workers who were hired in the final hour of the day (v. 9). But the parable relies on the assumption of the employer's charity, not his employees' productivity. It is a parable about God's grace to those who do not deserve His favor.[38] It is not a parable about how to run a profitable farm. It is not about capital accumulation, workers' productivity, and competitive wages. It is about charity to the able-bodied poor. This is work-related charity, not output-dependent remuneration.

Smith's explanation of customer service as a means of wealth ac-

35. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 13.
36. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 36.
37. North, *Wisdom and Dominion*, ch. 85.
38. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 40.

cumulation in *The Wealth of Nations* had nothing to do with charity and everything to do with mutual self-interest. In what has become a classic statement of voluntary exchange, Smith wrote:

> But man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only. He will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favour, and show them that it is for their own advantage to do for him what he requires of them. Whoever offers to another a bargain of any kind, proposes to do this. Give me that which I want, and you shall have this which you want, is the meaning of every such offer; and it is in this manner that we obtain from one another the far greater part of those good offices which we stand in need of. It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages.[39]

Smith's observation about how men gain their goals through gaining the self-interested cooperation of others stands as a turning point in economic theory—indeed, a turning point in social theory in general. But, as we shall see, it was not original with Smith. The innovator was Bernard Mandeville.[40] But because Smith framed the motivational process positively, in terms of production, unlike Mandeville, who focused on consumption, he launched an intellectual revolution, as overworked as that word is. As surely as Charles Darwin's idea of the biological evolution of a species through the undesigned, impersonal natural selection of individual members of a species launched an intellectual revolution, so did Smith's idea of an increase in national wealth through undesigned, self-interested voluntary exchanges of individuals.[41]

In Appendix C, I go into greater detail regarding Smith's economics and the social theory of the eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment. When the Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991, this event left the methodological legacy of Smith's economics and the right-wing Enlightenment's social theory as the dominant worldview in the West, with the socialist remnant fighting a rear-guard action

39. Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations* (1776), Book I, Ch. 2.

40. Appendix C:C.

41. Darwin's insight was an extension of Smith's: from the idea of an unplanned but orderly national economy to the idea of unplanned but orderly biological evolution. See F. A. Hayek, *New Studies in Philosophy, Politics, Economics and the History of Ideas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 264–65. This is an essay on the influence of Bernard Mandeville's famous poem and his commentary, *Fable of the Bees*.

from inside the environmentalism movement.[42] Marxism's failed experiment in Russia took down the nineteenth century's socialist intellectual legacy. Adam Smith won by default intellectually and also by capitalism's enormous economic output. The fact of the non-Communist world's systemic compound economic growth could no longer be swept under the socialists' tattered rug, which by 1989 had too many holes.

The Scottish Enlightenment was a Unitarian alternative to the worldview of seventeenth-century Scottish Presbyterianism, with its system of local congregations, where initiative lay, held in check by a hierarchical system of appellate church courts. The Scottish Enlightenment was a self-conscious attempt to remove from social theory all traces of the predestinating God of Scottish Calvinism. *This was an intellectual war against Calvinism's doctrines of God's absolute decree, sovereignty, and providence*. The Scottish Enlightenment always had an atheistic element, beginning with David Hume's skepticism, and this implicit atheism became dominant methodologically with Smith's successors in the nineteenth century. Indeed, it became dominant in *The Wealth of Nations*, which no longer relied on the Unitarian moralism that had undergirded his book, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). In *The Wealth of Nations*, the free market's sanctions of profit and loss, held in check by the coercive sanctions of a limited civil government, replaced the sanctions of God's final judgment as explanations of economic causation. Sentiment was replaced by self-interest.

F. A Christian Reconstruction of Economic Theory

Until the publication of Rushdoony's *Institutes of Biblical Law* (1973), Christian social theory had always been derivative. Christian scholars had always imported one or another humanistic worldview, baptizing it with convenient Christian phrases. This procedure began with the early church's apologists, who treated Greek philosophy, especially Platonic thought, as if it were a precursor of Christianity, as if Greek philosophy were true as far as it went, but missing certain clarifying

42. The best example of this transition was the career of deposed Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, who immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union raised millions of dollars in the West to start an environmentalist "think tank," Green Cross International. On its Web home page, we read: "We need a new system of values, a system of the organic unity between mankind and nature and the ethic of global responsibility.—Mikhail Gorbachev." The organization is located in the high-rent Presidio district of San Francisco. The Presidio had been an American military base during Gorbachev's reign as Soviet dictator.

theological insights. In late medieval Christianity, the church's major philosophers substituted Aristotle for Plato. In modern times, there have been a few attempts by socially conservative Roman Catholic laymen to invent a whitewashed version of the late-medieval world's guild-based local economies, but academic economists have steadfastly avoided such exercises in nostalgia. It was Rushdoony's insight that in order to develop an explicitly biblical social theory, it is necessary to return to the Mosaic law, which means theonomy, which means theocracy, which means embarrassment among one's peers.

This question must be dealt with by anyone who attempts to reconstruct economic theory along biblical lines: "Does the Bible indicate that individual self-interest is the correct starting point for economic theory?" If the answer is "no," then isn't any attempt to make individual self-interest the starting point for Christian economics an importation from the right-wing Enlightenment?

The Bible does not begin with the doctrine of each person's self-interest. It begins with the doctrine of creation (Gen. 1). The fundamental economic principle is this: *God owns the world on the basis of His creation of the world*.[43] He delegates to individuals a temporary authority to administer some aspects of the creation on His behalf. This is the creation mandate, or as I call it, the dominion covenant (Gen. 1:26–28).[44] The starting point for Christian economics is the doctrine of ownership: God's original ownership[45] and individual man's delegated ownership.[46]

Every person is an individual steward of a specified portion of God's resources. Each of us will be called to account on judgment day to give an account of his stewardship of God's resources (Matt. 25:14–30).[47] This would imply methodological individualism, except for one fact: mankind as a species has been given authority over the world as a functioning system, so there is also corporate responsibility. There are both individual and corporate responsibility: ownership by the many, and ownership by the one. This reflects God's original ownership, for God is a Trinity: three persons, one God. Each of the persons of the Trinity has His own function and responsibilities in relation to the creation. This is the Protestant theologians' doctrine

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43. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, ch. 1.

44. *Ibid*., chaps. 3, 4.

45. Gary North, *Inherit the Earth: Biblical Blueprints for Economics* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987), ch. 1.

46. *Ibid*., ch. 2.

47. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 47.

of the *economical* Trinity. There is hierarchy within the economical Trinity: Father > Son > Holy Ghost. Yet they are equal in being: the doctrine of the *ontological* Trinity. Men also share in an analogous equality of being. Paul preached to the Athenians:

> **God that made the world and all things therein**, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of **one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth**, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us (Acts 17:24–27).

Whenever Christian economics begins with the doctrine of God's original ownership of the creation, the most fundamental economic law is this: "Thou shalt not steal."[48] Put another way, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). The commandment against theft establishes private ownership: a legal boundary placed around objects. Private property began in the garden of Eden, when God identified one tree as inviolable. Man's rebellion began with a transgression of a private property boundary.[49]

God imposes a system of dual sanctions in His system of delegated private ownership: profit and loss.[50] Individual self-interest is not the starting point for Christian economic theory, but it is a component of such a theory, as the parable of the talents indicates (Matt. 25:14–30).[51] Apart from each person's individual self-interest, God's promise of heaven and His warning of hell would not motivate a listener to repent (Matt. 25:31–46). The self-interest of subordinates is the primary means for a manager to gain their voluntary cooperation. Similarly, without profit and loss, customers would lose both their carrot and their stick, which they use to persuade producers to provide what customers wish to buy at prices that they are willing to pay.

Contrary to the Scottish Enlightenment, the free market's economic sanctions are not evolutionary. They are covenantal. They are part of God's curse of Adam and His grace through Christ. A humanistic economist does not recognize the covenantal nature of economic

48. North, *Inherit the Earth*, ch. 3.
49. Chapter 9.
50. *Ibid.*, ch. 4.
51. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 47.

sanctions. He regards them as beyond supernatural design, merely part of a system of evolved rules of conduct. He is incorrect. God has built economic sanctions into His system of biblical law (Lev. 26; Deut. 28). In the long run, corporate obedience to God's biblical law-order will produce higher-than-average positive economic sanctions, which in turn expand corporate wealth. But this predictable outcome must be taken on faith before it can be implemented and thereafter verified statistically. *Grace precedes law*. Obedience to God's law does produce greater wealth, which is supposed to reinforce men's faith in God's covenant. "But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day" (Deut. 8:18).[52]

Paul in this passage does not deny the legitimacy of individual self-interest. On the contrary, he invokes it: "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come." His point is that *self-interest should not be devoid of covenantal understanding*. The single-minded pursuit of positive economic sanctions is self-destructive, but this fact does not negate the legitimacy of positive economic sanctions and their pursuit. What is significant, Paul says, is a man's goal governing his quest for positive economic sanctions, "that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate."

What the modern academic defenders of Christian socialism or Christian Keynesianism refuse to acknowledge is that nowhere in the New Testament or the Mosaic law are negative ecclesiastical or civil sanctions imposed on someone who refuses to be open-handed to the poor. Biblical texts recommend open-handedness, but the negative sanctions for rejecting this advice are always imposed by God, not by open-membership public covenantal institutions: church or state. The defenders of Christian socialism or interventionism insist that the Bible's texts that recommend charity can and should be used to justify endowing the state with the authority to impose violence against those people who resist the politicians' confiscation of their wealth in the name of assisting the poor.

Policies of political confiscation are adopted by democratically elected politicians in order to purchase votes from those constituents to whom they promise a portion of the plunder. This distribution takes place only after the bureaucrats who administer these programs

52. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 22.

are paid their share. Defenders of Christian socialism or interventionism who would not tolerate for a moment the suggestion of the biblical right of a church's officers to impose negative sanctions on members who refuse to tithe to the local church, let alone refuse to surrender half of their income to the church, rail against my view of the confiscatory state, which is Samuel's.

> And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. **And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants**. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. **He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants**. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day (I Sam. 8:11–18).[53]

In the opinion of the Christian socialist or economic interventionist, *biblically legitimate charity grows out of the barrel of a gun*. The effective mobilization of charity, he believes, is lawfully determined by that organized political group which persuades a majority of voters to hand over the state's gun to the group's elected representatives. As Professor Hay has succinctly presented the case, "The citizens may all agree, to a greater or lesser extent, that no one should be allowed to go without the basic necessities of life. But individuals are not willing to shoulder the burden of caring for the poor unless they know that the burden of caring for the poor will be shared out among all those with sufficient substance to help. So an element of coercion may be entirely acceptable."[54] I would add, *entirely acceptable especially to those voters who are on the receiving end of the loot*. In short, Hay was necessarily insisting that God's commandment against theft will eventually have to be amended by Christian voters: "Thou shalt not steal, except by majority vote."

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53. Gary North, *Disobedience and Defeat: An Economic Commentary on the Historical Books* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 14.

54. Donald Hay, *Economics Today: A Christian Critique* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1989), p. 89.

Conclusion

Paul viewed riches as tools that can be put to God's service through charitable giving. He warned against the spiritual pitfalls associated with the pursuit of riches. For those who have already attained riches, he recommended generosity. Wealth is to be put at the service of the poor. The means of service is charity, according to this passage.

Paul did not say that charity is the only form of economic service. He also did not mention service through economic production. Economic production directly serves those people who are part of the production system. Men seek to improve their temporal circumstances by exchanging the output of their labor and capital. This method of service does not solve the other problem: the empty hand. Those who have nothing to exchange are outcasts of the system of production.

Paul in this passage tells Timothy to tell the rich that they should open their filled hands to those with empty hands. This is a test of the rich man's faith in God. The alternative is for the rich to exercise faith in the uncertainty of riches. Rich men must serve God or mammon. The same choice faces the poor. They can pursue wealth, or they can trust in God. They must serve God or mammon. The answer to the question, "Whom do you serve?" is found in the answer to the question: "Whom do you trust for your protection?"

There have been occasional attempts to integrate charity as an analytic category into economic theory, but these attempts have failed. Free market economic theory ever since Adam Smith has been based on the assumption that individuals act to improve their circumstances. They seek to exchange an existing set of circumstances for what they hope will be a more pleasing set. This assumption regarding human action has made possible an enormous volume of economic analysis, some of it more realistic than others. But no one has discovered a logically consistent theory of economic action that relies primarily, or even secondarily, on the assumption that charity is a fundamental category of human action. Remove from economic analysis the assumption that people usually act in a self-interested way, and modern economic theory collapses. Remove from economic analysis the assumption that people are occasionally charitable, and virtually all of the analytical system remains.

This insight by free market economists regarding human action is consistent with the principle of the tithe: God claims for His local church only 10% of a person's net income. Whatever individuals give

away voluntarily beyond this minimal percentage is a matter of conscience. The principle of the tithe tells us that the system of stewardship that has been established by God relies on individual self-interest as the primary economic motivator. The question is: How will the individual allocate his income—spending, saving, and giving? There is no question, biblically speaking, that as far as the covenantally normal operation of the economy is concerned, God is satisfied with the tithe. The state should be satisfied with even less (I Sam. 8:17). How individuals allocate the remaining 80+ percent is up to them as owners. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" (Matt. 20:15).[55] This response by the land owner, who in the parable represents God, greatly upsets defenders of the modern interventionist state. Their eyes are indeed evil. The Scottish Enlightenment was closer to the Bible on economic principles than are Christian defenders of the modern interventionist state. To promote coercion by state bureaucrats as an alternative to Adam Smith's economics is not a Bible-based solution to the problem of mankind's assertion of autonomy. We must go to the Bible in search of the solution, not to the writings of John Maynard Keynes[56] and his disciples, who are part of the problem.

No economically productive society has withstood the lure of riches, not even the most rigorous of Western medieval monasteries, which repeatedly became rich because of the self-sacrifice and high rates of investment by the monks. Thrift and hard work produce high output, which in turn produces high income. This is why Western monastic orders became the targets of spiritual reformers every few centuries. None of these calls to return to the ideal of poverty survived the long-term growth effects of income above expenses. The corporate ideal of poverty, when accompanied by thrift and hard work, invariably produces wealth, which over time affects the original goal of sacrificial poverty.

Paul does not tell Timothy to tell rich people in the church to impoverish themselves. He tells Timothy to tell them to lay up in store for themselves a good foundation for the future. *How are the covenant-keeping rich supposed to do this? By being open-handed with the poor*. Paul does not suggest or even imply that charitable giving is a

55. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 40.

56. On Keynes' background, see Richard Deacon [Donald McCormick], *The Cambridge Apostles: A History of Cambridge University's Elite Intellectual Secret Society* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1986). McCormick was an expert in the history of the West's twentieth-century secret service organizations, i.e., spying.

one-time event that is designed to make poor men out of rich men. He says that covenant-keeping rich men inescapably must put their trust somewhere, either in God or in the uncertainty of riches. He calls on them to exercise faith in the God who created the world, and who sustains it by His providence. He calls on them to demonstrate their covenantal subordination to the God of the cosmos by obeying God's law to be generous. There will be a positive sanction in history for such obedience: a good foundation in the future.

Then what of rich men who are covenant-breakers? Paul never said. Adam Smith did. They should remain socially productive through profit-seeking activities to satisfy customer demand at prices that customers are willing and able to pay. So far, no one has offered a better recommendation.

CONCLUSION

> *As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.*
>
> I TIMOTHY 1:3–4

The primary theme of Paul's first epistle to Timothy is ecclesiastical hierarchy. This larger theme necessarily involves the reciprocal themes of leadership and subordination.

Paul raises the issue of hierarchy in his command to Timothy to challenge false teachers in the church at Ephesus. He transfers to Timothy the authority to speak on Paul's behalf in stamping out a heresy in the church at Ephesus. This command is based on the doctrine of representation. Paul, as an apostle, represents Christ judicially. Timothy represents Paul judicially.

A. The Judaizers

What was this heresy? The heresy of the Judaizers. The Judaizers taught that gentile Christians had to follow the priestly laws of the Mosaic covenant, as interpreted by the rabbis. They brought genealogies into the church, as if genealogies had anything to do with holiness. Paul opposed members of this faction.

Paul then offers a definition of orthodoxy, which he calls sound doctrine, or as the Greek text puts it, *healthful teaching*. He states clearly that the gospel and certain Mosaic civil statutes go together.

> But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whore-

> mongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust (I Tim. 1:8–11).

I know of no stronger New Testament evidence for the continuing validity of the Mosaic civil law in the New Covenant era. First, Paul says that to argue that these laws do not still apply is "contrary to sound doctrine." Second, these laws are not made for righteous men. They are made for unrighteous men, i.e., criminals and would-be criminals.

These laws are still valid, Paul says, yet they were Mosaic civil laws. The institutional church does not exercise jurisdiction over unrighteous men, who are not in covenant with the church. This was equally true under the Mosaic covenant. To these laws were attached specified civil sanctions. The judicial rule still holds: *no sanctions–no law*. These sanctions must therefore be applied to unrighteous men who have violated these laws. These men are outside the church covenant. These laws therefore must be enforced by some institution other than the church. There is only one covenantal institution that possesses this authority: civil government.[1]

Paul in this passage defends theonomy. The Christian who rejects this conclusion should offer an alternative explanation of this passage. Silence is not an argument. It was not in 1818, either.

B. The Lure of Subordination Through Neutrality

In 1818, the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) also refused to regard this passage as either theologically or judicially binding. The church upheld the de-frocking in 1815 of Virginia pastor George Bourne, who had cited I Timothy 1:10 against manstealing as evidence that Southern slave-holding was a sin. The politically correct position of the South's slaveholding leadership became dominant ecclesiastically in Old School Presbyterianism, North and South, 1818–1861. Only the Civil War (1861–65) persuaded the Old School in the North to adopt abolitionism, not on the basis of the Bible, but as a political necessity. Only the military defeat of the South in 1865 persuaded the Old School in the South to accept, retroactively, the moral legitimacy of abolitionism.[2]

Old School Presbyterianism was led intellectually by Princeton

1. Chapter 1.
2. Appendix D.

Theological Seminary, the most academically influential conservative Protestant seminary in the world during the nineteenth century. Old School theologians argued that slavery and abolitionism were *adiaphora*—things irrelevant to the Bible and Christianity. Thus, the Old School rejected the abolitionist implications of Bourne's position. A decade later, New England Unitarians took up Bourne's conclusion, but without mentioning Bourne, and converted it into a moral and political cause. By 1865, a handful of New England Unitarians had become the politically dominant ecclesiastical faction in Congress. The Old School Presbyterians, by maintaining their peace with the South's Calvinists by consenting to Bourne's de-frocking, turned their collective backs on the dominant American political and ethical issue, 1820–1865, and thereby handed over political power and legitimacy to the Unitarians. The Old School's attempt to stay religiously neutral on the most important issue of their day led to the de-legitimizing of the Old School after 1865 and its defeat, issue by issue, decade by decade, after 1870. It disappeared in the 1930s.[3]

Neutrality looks enticing for a while: a way to avoid controversy. But, sooner or later, a reliance on neutrality undermines any movement that tries to justify doing nothing to stop some acknowledged public evil, thereby transferring influence to those who are committed to doing something. Neutrality is a myth. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12:30). The same criticism applies to the concept of political pluralism.[4]

Paul is not neutral in this epistle. He affirms specific civil laws of the Mosaic Covenant as binding theologically in the New Covenant era. He defines theological orthodoxy—sound doctrine—in terms of this affirmation. Non-theonomists prefer to avoid commenting on either Paul's affirmation of Mosaic civil laws or his definition of sound doctrine. They prefer to categorize Paul's use of these Mosaic civil laws as moral laws.[5] This approach raises a crucial question: Laws enforced by which covenantal institution, church or state? It also raises another crucial question: Which sanctions?

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3. Gary North, *Crossed Fingers: How the Liberals Captured the Presbyterian Church* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1996).

4. Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989).

5. William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1957), pp. 67–69.

C. Implications Beyond Ecclesiology

Paul's letter to Timothy focuses on ecclesiology, but its principles cannot be contained inside the four walls of the local church. These are general covenantal principles, so they find applications in the other covenantal institutions: family and state.

1. Political Authority

When Christians pray for rulers, they are involved in peace-keeping. Their prayers on behalf of civil rulers produce results that may be contrary to what civil rulers are planning for the church. These plans are then overruled by God. "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will" (Prov. 21:1).

Intercessory prayer places civil rulers under God's positive historical sanctions. God responds to intercessory prayer by providing peace for His church. This cause-and-effect relationship rests on a hierarchy: God over state. This hierarchy is manifested in the form of positive sanctions—peace and quiet—for the church and for covenant-keepers generally. The church is under the threat of civil sanctions, but intercessory prayer overturns what appears initially to be a covenant-breaker's preferred hierarchy: state over church.[6]

2. Against the Welfare State

Paul teaches that only a few widows are entitled to permanent financial support from the church: those over age 60 whose descendants refuse to support them, and who were married only once.[7] Paul limits support from the church to this narrow a category of "widow indeed."

There is no New Testament case for allowing the state to extract wealth from one group of voters in order to transfer it to another group, merely because members of the first group are richer than members of the second group. If it is illegitimate for the church to use wealth collected from voluntary members in order to support permanently widows who are under age 60, or widows who were married more than once, then it is surely illegitimate for covenant-breakers to use the threat of violence to extract wealth from covenant-keepers in order to support impoverished covenant-breakers.

When Professor Hay wrote the following, he should have offered

6. Chapter 2.
7. Chapter 6.

support from some biblical text: "The citizens may all agree, to a greater or lesser extent, that no one should be allowed to go without the basic necessities of life. But individuals are not willing to shoulder the burden of caring for the poor unless they know that the burden of caring for the poor will be shared out among all those with sufficient substance to help. So an element of coercion may be entirely acceptable."[8] A theological assertion with such far-sweeping political implications requires biblical support. But Christian scholars who make such sweeping generalizations as this one rarely supply such support. They import conclusions from the world of early twentieth-century humanist welfare economics, and they baptize these imported conclusions with a few biblical-sounding phrases. They need to provide textual exegesis in support of these imported conclusions.

3. Democracy and Liberty

Consider Paul's doctrine that some elders—but not all—are worthy of financial support (I Tim. 5:17–18).[9] This view of deserving performance inevitably raises the institutional question of who is responsible for making this judgment. The answer is clear: the individual member, whose donations support the church. The democratic implication of this position should be obvious. Each adult church member has the right to "vote with his feet" when the local church's hierarchy refuses to honor his assessment when he votes with his purse. The economic sanctions of money, either donated or retained, are lawfully in the hands of the laity, whose productivity supports the church.

The Roman Catholic Church's model of geographically based parish church membership was replaced in Northern Europe by the rise of Protestant sects. The democratic ideal rose to prominence in both church and state in Protestant nations. The Protestant concept of the legitimate authority of a church member to decide how much he should pay, and for which services, spread into politics in the mid-seventeenth century. In England, the debate over political sovereignty during the combined civil war and Protectorate era (1642–59) raised the issue of property ownership and the franchise. The Protestant church subsequently set the pattern for the modern democratic state: *the authority of the member over his purse*. He can lawfully put his membership where his heart is. He can also lawfully put his money where his heart is.

8. Donald Hay, *Economics Today: A Christian Critique* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1989), p. 89.

9. Chapter 7.

The problem comes when he seeks through coercive political action to put *your* money where *his* heart is. Christians have been as beguiled by the lure of welfare state politics as non-Christians. They have believed that it is legitimate for the state to extract money on threat of violence if the money is used for broadly defined humanitarian purposes. They have believed in the modern world's version of the eighth commandment: "Thou shalt not steal, except by majority vote." This was the great fear of Henry Ireton, Oliver Cromwell's son-in-law, at the Putney Debates of the New Model Army in 1647.[10] He believed that by extending the franchise to men without property, those with property would thereby extend to those without property the power to vote themselves a portion of the wealth of those who own property. Yet this is what is done in every local Protestant church in which all adult members have the vote. The tithing members are usually outnumbered by non-tithing members, yet all members vote. The democratic Protestant churches have set the standard for democratic politics. Those members who do not pay a tithe establish institutional spending priorities for those who do pay the tithe.

4. Slavery and Non-Violent Reform

Paul makes it clear that slaves are to honor their owners, even when those owners are covenant-breakers.[11] While a slave is to accept liberation when offered by the owner (I Cor. 7:21),[12] he is not to run away or otherwise defy his owner. The superiority of freedom to slavery places responsibility on Christian owners to free their slaves. It also places responsibility on the civil government to punish all infractions of the Mosaic laws governing slavery.[13]

England freed its slaves without bloodshed. This was possible because (1) Christians were the primary abolitionists, and they possessed moral legitimacy; (2) slavery was confined to regions of the empire outside of Great Britain; (3) the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain was urban and based on legally free labor. The United States government went to war because (1) hot-heads in South Carolina seceded before President Lincoln was inaugurated, thus beginning the secession movement; (2) Lincoln wanted to collect national

10. A. S. P. Woodhouse (ed.), *Puritans and Liberty*, 3rd ed. (University of Chicago Press, 1951).

11. Chapter 8.

12. Gary North, *Ethics and Dominion*, ch. 8.

13. Gary North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012) , Part 3, *Tools of Dominion* (1990), ch. 36.

tariffs, and South Carolinians asserted sovereignty over this tax base; (3) Christians in the South defended a morally wicked system of slave breeding by organized fornication, and did so by invoking the Bible.[14] They forgot: God is not mocked.

There is no doubt that Paul accepted slavery as an institution. He regarded it as less desirable than freedom. He offered no theory of natural slavery. He did not invoke the Mosaic law in his acceptance of slavery among the gentiles. He offered a theology of subordination. Slavery is a condition to test the faith of covenant-keeping slaves and their owners. Paul regarded subordination as a means of dominion: dominion over personal sin and resentment, dominion over discontent, dominion over poverty, and ultimately dominion over slavery. The gospel liberates sinners from the bondage of sin, and this is the redemptive starting point for all successful, culture-wide liberation.

> And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts (Ps. 119:45).

> And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you (Gal. 2:4–5).

> But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain (James 1:25–26).

According to Paul's theology, personal liberty does not begin with an act of violence. It begins with an act of principled submission to God. This submission is not to be based on a theology of personal quietism. It is to be based on confidence in the future, faith that in the long run, law-abiding service to God and men produces dominion. This is the faith that Moses announced to the Israelites.

> And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered

14. Appendix D.

> thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live (Deut. 30:1–6).

The Mosaic civil laws that legitimized the permanent, inter-generational enslavement of foreigners (Lev. 25:44–46) were part of the Mosaic land laws, which were abolished forever in A.D. 70, with the final replacement of Old Covenant Israel with the church.[15]

The Mosaic civil laws governing a master's treatment of his slaves remain in force. To assert that slavery remains authorized by the New Testament, but without the Mosaic civil laws that restrained the owners' mistreatment of slaves, is to assert a form of tyranny. On the other hand, to ignore Paul's acceptance of slavery makes universal abolitionism exegetically impossible to defend biblically. Orthodox New Testament abolitionism, were it to revive, would call for the eradication of all forms of inter-generational slavery, and also any form of non-criminal permanent servitude that is not protected by the Mosaic laws governing the treatment of slaves.

A widely held assumption has been that abolitionism, 1800–1885, eliminated slavery in the West. This is a false assumption. Abolitionism eliminated private chattel slavery, which was replaced in the twentieth century by civilian concentration camps (Britain's Boer War in South Africa) and slave labor camps (Fascist and Communist). Slavery as an ideal was appropriated by messianic civil governments, which made slavery a state monopoly.

5. Contentment and Christian Reconstruction

Paul's warning against discontent rests on the doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of God. God's decree is sovereign. A person's condition is not random. It is part of the providence of God. Neither wealth nor poverty, neither health nor sickness, is outside the comprehensive providence of God. It takes faith to accept this. This is why "godliness with contentment is great gain" (I Tim. 6:6). A covenant-keeper who has been given the gift of contentment has received a highly valuable gift.[16]

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15. Gary North, *Boundaries and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Leviticus*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1994] 2012), ch. 31.

16. Chapter 10.

Then what of the discontent associated with creativity and dedication? What of Paul's command? "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (I Tim. 6:12). "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (II Tim. 4:7). How does someone contentedly fight? The answer: patiently. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:1–2). Patience, too, is a gift of God. It is a great gift.

> But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience (Luke 8:15).

> Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life (Rom. 2:4–7).

> But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses (II Cor. 6:4).

Here we have the biblical alternative to discontent: patience. This is what should keep righteous men moving forward steadily. Patience is a steady working toward a goal. It is dedication that relies heavily on *confidence in the future, not discontent with the present*. Godly patience is based on faith in God's providence. This is not a providence of Christian cultural stalemate, let alone defeat. *It is a providence of cultural victory in history for covenant-keepers*.

Discontent is spiritually dangerous because it implies that God is somehow not in charge. It also implies that historical conditions are stacked against the covenant-keeper. The cross testifies against such a supposition. What looked like a defeat was the basis of Christ's victory. The cross and resurrection took place in history. So did Christ's ascension. This is why all forms of eschatology that imply or boldly state that Christian victory does not involve the extension of redemp-

tion and its effects to all of history have not come to grips with the historicity of cross-resurrection-ascension. It was not merely Christ's spirit that rose from the dead, but His body also. The fulfillment of Christ's bodily resurrection in history (I Cor. 15:3, 13–17), involves God's turning Christ's enemies into Christ's footstools in history. Until this happens, the end of history cannot take place. Amillennialism therefore cannot be true, for it denies the hierarchy of Christendom's victory in history.

> For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (I Cor. 15:25–28).[17]

Christian contentment is not supposed to lead to personal quietism or mysticism: a theology of escape from, or acceptance of, things as they are. It is not supposed to produce some version of principled lethargy. *Biblically, contentment means the acceptance of the present order as a starting point for positive change*.

This process of contentment is analogous to sanctification's three stages: definitive, progressive, and final. A covenant-keeper is content with the present because Christ's future, visible, institutional victory over His enemies in history has been announced in advance. *Definitive victory is behind us temporally, for the resurrection and ascension of Christ were in history*. Christendom's victory, not its defeat, is being presently worked out historically. Perseverance will result in final victory, both individually and culturally.

This view of patience and contentment is obviously postmillennial. Eschatologies of guaranteed cultural, political, and economic defeat for the gospel in history have a tendency to motivate covenant-keepers to withdraw from "hopeless" battles, which are just about all of the battles outside of the prayer closet and the local church. This is why there are so many trivial battles inside local churches. They are the only battles that most Christians think they can win, mainly by forced exclusion of the losers. Pietism and quietism are far more likely when covenant-keepers see their efforts to transform social sins as doomed from the start.

Pessimillennial covenant-keepers are tempted to adopt a theology

17. Gary North, *Judgment and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), ch. 16.

of souls-only redemption, and therefore souls-only evangelism. They deny that Christ's redemption can or even should be comprehensive in history.[18] They are willing to compromise with theories of epistemological or political neutrality, so that they can escape any responsibility for transforming culture or politics or economics in the name of Christ by means of biblical law. They adopt humanism's theory of political pluralism as the only reasonable hope in a world of guaranteed eschatological defeat for the gospel. They adopt a stalemate mentality.[19] They seek to avoid the discontent associated with an eschatology of assured cultural defeat in history by defining Christian victory so narrowly—internally, personally, familistically—that they can live emotionally with the prospects of this comprehensive cultural defeat.[20] They voluntarily and philosophically turn the state over to covenant-breakers and covenant-breaking philosophies with the assertion that God would have it so. Problem: God does not want it so.[21] God will not have it so.[22]

D. Dominion Through Service

1. Following and Leading

This epistle calls covenant-keepers to victory through both their exercise of leadership and their subordination. This seemingly contradictory strategy rests on a presupposition: *we learn how to lead by learning first how to follow*. Put militarily, men begin as recruits, then trainees, then either as low-level "grunts" or their equivalent in the officer corps, second lieutenants. A wise second lieutenant makes it clear early to his top sergeant that he plans to back up the sergeant's decisions in public. He lets his sergeant know that he is well aware of his own inexperience. The sergeant knows more about the eccentricities of the first lieutenant and the captain than the second lieutenant does. Similarly, a wise church officer had better be familiar with the chain of command when he first begins to lead.

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18. Gary North, *Is the World Running Down? Crisis in the Christian Worldview* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1988), Appendix C.

19. Gary North, *Backward, Christian Soldiers? An Action Manual for Christian Reconstruction* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1984), ch. 11.

20. A representative example of this re-definition of the meaning and extent of gospel victory is the book by David J. Engelsma, a theologian in the Protestant Reformed Church, *Christ's Spiritual Kingdom: A Defense of Reformed Amillennialism* (Redlands, California: Reformed Witness, 2001).

21. Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *The Greatness of the Great Commission: The Christian Enterprise in a Fallen World* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990).

22. Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *He Shall Have Dominion: A Postmillennial Eschatology*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1992] 1997).

Paul tells Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Tim. 4:12). Leaders must lead. But, he also warns him, "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren" (I Tim. 5:1). In short, treat your sergeants with respect.

God has established a strategy of dominion. It involves subordination. Even leadership involves service. This is what the world cannot understand. Jesus taught this principle of leadership.

> Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Mark 10:42b–45).

The world sees personal and institutional liberation in terms of the capture of the existing instruments of power. In contrast, Jesus and Paul saw liberation as the transfer of one's subordination to sin to the yoke righteousness, from mammon to Christ. There is never an escape from subordination; there is only a transfer of allegiance.

> No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (Matt. 6:24).[23]

> Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matt. 11:28–30).[24]

2. The New Testament vs. the Scottish Enlightenment

What distinguishes the New Testament's economic analysis from modern free market economic theory is this: rival views of the role of wealth as motivation. The New Testament denies that the pursuit of personal wealth is legitimate if it is an autonomous pursuit, i.e., wealth pursued for its own sake.[25] The Scottish Enlightenment offered the pursuit of wealth as morally harmless and socially beneficial, whenever this pursuit takes place in a social order based on private property.

23. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch 14.

24. *Ibid*. ch. 25.

25. Chapter 10.

Adam Smith's argument that gaining more wealth is a seller's motivation for providing greater customer service is not inconsistent with Christianity; indeed, it is the application of the Bible's service principle to economics. But there is no doubt that this insight cannot be found in the New Testament. *The Scottish Enlightenment placed individual self-interest above service to the other person as the prime motivator in economic life*. The New Testament does not disagree with the accuracy of the observation; it does disagree with the legitimacy of individual self-interest as a person's primary motivation.[26]

The insight regarding *the seller's self-interested customer service* is the most important insight in both the history of economic thought and economic history. It stands as the basis of the unprecedented expansion of economic wealth, 1750–2012. *The New Testament clearly warns against this motivation, which is the service of mammon*. The free market social order harnesses man's mammon-driven motivation, directing it toward service to customers, whether covenant-keepers or covenant-breakers, but there is no doubt that the lasting academic legacy of the Scottish Enlightenment's social and economic theory is to dispense with all discussions of supernaturally revealed morality or higher service to God. Academic free market theory substitutes impersonal, undesigned social evolution for God's providential control over history.

The Bible tells us to serve others. Positive sanctions will come as a result. Adam Smith said that the positive sanction is greater wealth. The New Testament does not teach this. It also does not deny it. It does warn men that service is primary; God's blessings, whether eternal or temporal, are secondary. Adam Smith, in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), said that this form of service is an important aspect of human motivation. In *The Wealth of Nations*, he stressed self-interested service. In this book, he generally ignored charitable service. His intellectual successors have never regarded *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* as contributing anything of analytical interest that is not found also in *The Wealth of Nations*.

Christ warned men to get their priorities straight.[27] He warned men to serve others primarily for God's sake, not for their own sake. Therefore, any attempt to substitute temporal sanctions, either positive or negative, as one's top priority, rather than service to God through service to men, is a form of the worship of mammon.

Civil government is not supposed to coerce men into the worship

26. Appendix C.
27. North, *Priorities and Dominion*.

of God over mammon. While political pluralists would agree with this political principle, they rarely agree with the economic implication of this principle.

The Bible does not authorize the use of state power to extract wealth from mammon-worshippers on behalf of God's causes. The commandment against theft includes the forcible extraction of wealth from members of one political group solely to increase the income of another group. This prohibition includes the transfer of wealth from the rich to the poor, or, what in fact takes place, from the rich to the middle class in the name of the poor.

Forcible wealth transfers necessarily must invoke the politics of mammon: economic salvation (healing). *Christian socialism is baptized mammonism*. It substitutes power for voluntarism in the name of charity. Socialism is mammonism as surely as capitalism is, but is far more dangerous to both liberty and economic growth. The dividing theological issue is what a society's goals and means are: the kingdom of God vs. the kingdom of man.

Conclusion

Hierarchy is the basis of long-term biblical dominion. This mandates subordination: subordination first to God, and then subordination to others. It is through subordination that men gain authority, including authority over others. This principle is supposed to be the basis of rulership in the church. It should also be the basis of economic practice.

A vertical hierarchical structure governs all covenantal institutions: church, state, and family. There is a vertical hierarchy of lawful authority. A person grows in grace through lawful subordination to covenantal authorities.

> Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake (Rom. 13:1–5).[28]

28. Gary North, *Cooperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 11.

There is also horizontal hierarchy, such as showing grace to covenant-breakers. This form of hierarchy is less apparent in covenantal institutions. Covenantal horizontal service creates dependence on God, but not legal subordination to the church. The covenant-keeper serves those outside the faith as a way of testifying to God's grace. This service can result in the beneficiary's eternal destruction: negative sanctions.

> Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head (Rom. 12:19–20).[29]

On the other hand, horizontal covenantal service can bring salvation: positive sanctions.

> Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved (I Cor. 10:32–33).

What the New Testament does not teach, but which undergirds free market theory, is the fact that non-covenantal horizontal service to customers is the basis of income for producers. The pursuit of money by sellers matches the pursuit of benefits by customers. Both the seller and the customer must seek to please the person on the other side of the potential transaction. *But in God's economy, service is a self-authenticating goal.* One's motive for service must not rest on the hope of direct, personal temporal profit. Nevertheless, we should expect profit. God's sanctions in this world are not random.

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29. *Ibid.*, ch. 10.

APPENDIX A

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

We come now to a unified judicial issue that has two aspects: divorce and remarriage. Let me make myself as clear as I can: this is one topic. Any exegesis that attempts to consider divorce and remarriage as separate judicial issues must abandon both the Mosaic law and Christ's teaching on this two-fold but judicially unified subject.

This topic has divided Christian theologians ever since the very early church. Whenever we find a topic in the Bible that is universal in scope, both geographically and chronologically, but which has not yet been resolved by the church, we can be sure that there is a long-term debate regarding the proper principle of biblical interpretation and its application to specific texts, i.e., a debate over hermeneutics. In this case, the debate is over rival judicial interpretations.

The principle of judicial interpretation that I have adopted is *victim's rights*.[1]

A. Six Primary Texts

There are six defining texts that deal with divorce and/or remarriage: three in the Mosaic law and three in the gospels. Only four of these texts receive much attention by commentators.

Here are the three Mosaic texts, in the order of their familiarity:

> When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand,

1. Gary North, *Victim's Rights: The Biblical View of Civil Justice* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990). See also Gary North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012) Part 3, *Tools of Dominion* (1990), Appendix M.

> and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance (Deut. 24:1–4).

> If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate: And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him; And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days. But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel: Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you (Deut. 22:13–21).

> When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the LORD thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive, And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife; Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails; And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife. And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her (Deut. 21:10–14).

Here are the three New Testament texts, in order of their familiarity:

> It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adul-

> tery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery (Matt. 5:31–32).

> The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it (Matt. 19:3–12).

> And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery (Mark 10:2–12).

B. Divorce and Remarriage in the Old Testament

There were three legal avenues available to a Hebrew man to gain a lawful divorce under the Mosaic covenant: a bill of divorce, divorce by execution, and the divorce of a war bride. There was one legal avenue for a woman to achieve a divorce: divorce by execution.

1. Bill of Divorce

The bill of divorce was grounded in a two-fold factor: a *wife's loss of favor* in her husband's eyes because of *her uncleanness*. "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife" (Deut. 24:1–2).

The bill of divorce did not have to be confirmed by any court in order to be lawful. It was available only to husbands. A husband could secure a divorce on his own authority, i.e., on his word alone. A woman could gain a divorce only by the intervention of a civil court to convict her husband of a capital crime. On this issue, there was no equality before the law. The wife had less protection.

The text is specific: there had to be uncleanness. The exegetical problem is this: "uncleanness" is not defined in this text or in any other. It is described in other passages, but none of them seems to apply well to this passage. The Hebrew word translated here as "uncleanness" is more frequently translated "nakedness" in the King James Version. It sometimes refers to sexual sin, but it is more comprehensive than this. In Ezekiel, the word is used for national apostasy. Ezekiel brought a covenant lawsuit against Israel with these words:

> Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD: Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy **nakedness** discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them; Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy **nakedness** unto them, that they may see all thy **nakedness**. And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy (Ezek. 16:35–38).

This degree of rebellion would have been a capital crime. A man could gain a divorce by execution if his wife committed any capital crime, if he could prove this infraction in a civil court. Rushdoony lists these crimes as capital crimes for women: unchastity before marriage (Deut. 22:21), adultery after marriage (Deut. 22:22–23; Lev. 20:10), prostitution by a priest's daughter (Lev. 21:9), bestiality (Lev. 20:16; 18:23), wizardry or witchcraft (Ex. 22:18; Lev. 20:27), trans-

gressing the covenant (Deut. 17:2–5), and incest (Lev. 20:11–12, 14).[2] Furthermore, a woman could have her husband executed for 19 infractions.[3] In this sense, there was no equality before the law. The wife had greater protection.

If "uncleanness" referred exclusively to a crime, let alone a capital crime, how was it lawful for a husband, acting on his own authority, to send his wife away if she had committed a crime? In such a case, he would have been sending a criminal into the community, perhaps even to marry again. The Mosaic law was so hostile to such an act of knowing mercy that it mandated that parents bring a rebellious adult son before the magistrates and demand his execution (Deut. 21:18–21).[4] So, it is inconceivable that "nakedness" in this instance referred to a crime, let alone a capital crime.

Another judicial problem is the unilateral nature of the bill of divorce. There is no indication in the text that any court had to approve it before it became legally binding on the dismissed wife. She had no judicial appeal available to her. Her husband possessed a God-given authority over her to divorce her, and no human institution could lawfully reverse his judgment.

There was another possible avenue for gaining a divorce: *the vow of jealousy*. This legal procedure did not take place in a civil court. In order to be granted a divorce by execution, a husband had to prove in a civil court that his wife had committed adultery. Sometimes he could not prove this for lack of evidence, but he was nevertheless suspicious. This is why there was the vow of jealousy. This was the only law in the Mosaic law that was to be judged in terms of a miracle: the direct intervention of a supernatural force in the presence of a priest. The passage is not familiar to most readers (Num. 5:12–31). It is the longest single law in the Bible, unless we consider the laws of leprosy to be a single law (Lev. 13, 14).[5] If she was found guilty of adultery, she was not to be executed; she was instead visibly cursed by the swelling of her body (v. 27). Then she was to become a curse among the people (v. 27). This, clearly, was grounds for a divorce, but it was not grounds for her execution, presumably because the evidence was

2. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1973), p. 402.

3. *Idem*.

4. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 50.

5. Gary North, *Boundaries and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Leviticus*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1994] 2012), ch. 9.

based on a miracle. It testified against her, but not to the extent of mandating her execution. There were no witnesses. Adultery was a capital crime under the Mosaic law. "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death" (Lev. 20:10). This had to be proven in a civil court. The ordeal of jealousy was tried in an ecclesiastical court.

Deuteronomy 24:1–4, however, does not refer to any court of law, nor does it mention any right of a woman to gain a legal divorce by execution. It refers only to a husband who writes a writ of divorce. It was this Mosaic law that the Pharisees cited in their questioning of Jesus.

I argued in *Tools of Dominion* that some of the Mosaic law's capital crimes did not automatically require execution. The victim had the right to show mercy.[6] So, it might be argued that a husband wrote a bill of divorce instead of having his wife executed. But there is an overwhelming argument against this interpretation of Deuteronomy 24:1–4: Jesus told the Pharisees that Moses had given Israel this law because of the hardness of men's hearts. It was not given because of the softness of their hearts, i.e., their mercifulness. So, whatever the contextual meaning of "uncleanness"—we are not told what this was—it did not refer to a crime defined by a capital crime statute.

The wife had lost favor in the eyes (evaluation) of her husband. What was the meaning of favor? The Hebrew word means what it does in English. Someone finds favor in another person's assessment.

> But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison (Gen. 39:21).

> And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty (Ex. 3:21).

> Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens (Ruth 2:13).

The justification for divorcing her was her uncleanness. Either this uncleanness could not be proven in a civil court, or else this uncleanness was insufficient to justify her execution. Whatever it was, the infraction was so minor judicially that Jesus said that God had given Hebrew men this way of divorce because of their hard hearts. His implication was obvious: the men should have overlooked the infraction.

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6. North, *Authority and Dominion*, Appendix M:K.

I see no other way around the following interpretation of this law: *the bill of divorce was given to protect wives*. Jesus' insistence that this law was God's condescension to hardhearted husbands means that *it was not designed to protect husbands*. Their hardheartedness was the greater infraction in God's eyes, not the wives' uncleanness. The Mosaic law was less rigorous in dealing with the sins and crimes of women. There were fewer capital crimes for women, as Rushdoony points out. God's toleration under the Mosaic law included non-criminal uncleanness. Their husbands should have been patient with them, but they weren't. Therefore, had there been no legal way for a husband to remove his wife from his presence, his hardheartedness would have made her life miserable. This Mosaic law offered a way for a wife to escape from her husband's mean spirit, so that she could marry someone else. He wrote her a bill of divorce on his own authority. He did not consult a court. This was unquestionably legal.

A woman had no comparable option with respect to a husband who was unclean in her eyes. The law says nothing about her right to write him a bill of divorce. But if his infraction was one of the 19 capital crimes, she could relieve herself of his presence, and keep all of his assets, too.

Was she guilty of a major sin? The context indicates that she was not. A divorced wife could remarry (Deut. 24:2). In contrast, a wife who had secretly committed fornication prior to the marriage had to be executed. "Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you" (Deut. 22:21). The phrase, "so shalt thou put evil away from among you," was familiar to the Israelites.

> The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you (Deut. 17:7).

> And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel (Deut. 17:12).

> And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. And those which remain shall

> hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you (Deut. 19:18–20).

If a woman had committed a capital offense, she was to be executed, assuming that her spouse asked this sanction of the court. If he extended mercy, she was to be considered covenantally dead, and therefore ineligible for remarriage. The same was true for a man who committed a capital offense. There were more capital crimes for men than for women. So, to argue that uncleanness in the context of divorce was a capital crime, despite the fact that a husband did not have to bring his wife before a civil court, is to argue that God subsidized evil by means of the bill of divorce: she could lawfully remarry. Instead of putting away evil in the land, a husband merely put away his wife, making her available for someone else. God allowed another man to enjoy life with a sinner who supposedly deserved execution. The Mosaic law would therefore have subsidized a capital criminal. This makes no sense, biblically speaking.

I recognize an exegetical problem at this point. The Hebrew word for "uncleanness" elsewhere indicates a major infraction—indeed, a capital crime. But if, in the context of Deuteronomy 24, it also has this meaning, then a civil court had to be convened to try the case. Divorce by execution would have been mandatory. Only her husband, as her victim, had the legal right to show mercy to the convicted wife and her partner. The court did not possess this right. But this line of reasoning was cut short by Jesus, who made it plain that this law was not given by Moses for the sake of husbands' mercifulness, but rather for their hardheartedness. If we accept Jesus' explanation, we cannot accept "uncleanness" in this context as a capital crime. The civil government had no authority in this instance.

Jesus' disciples understood the limit that this law had placed on wives, and also the burden that Jesus' revision would place on husbands. Jesus said, "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry" (Matt. 19:9–10).

The Mosaic law of divorce by writ was a two-edged sword. It favored husbands in the sense that it was only available to husbands: no equality before the law. But it favored wives in the sense of providing a way for a wife of a hardhearted man to get out of the marriage and find a more tolerant husband. Jesus announced the judicial termina-

tion of this inequality before the law. A wife could get rid of her husband, He said. This thought shocked His disciples, who obviously approved of inequality before the law in this instance. *Their shock testifies to the radical break with the Mosaic law that Jesus' teaching on divorce and remarriage represented*. He was teaching that turnabout is fair play, that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. "His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry" (Matt. 19:10). Jesus did not soften the blow—a blow to 14 centuries of unilateral leeway for dissatisfied Israelite husbands. "But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given" (v. 11).

2. Divorce by Execution

The second passage, Deuteronomy 22:13–21, is straightforward. This was divorce by execution. It involved evidence, or lack thereof, for the wife: tokens of virginity. The punishment was death for the convicted wife or an economic fine paid to the father for the husband's false testimony. Notice also that the convicted husband was never allowed to divorce his wife (v. 19). This did not give her a license to commit a capital crime. God's law does not subsidize evil. If she committed a capital crime, he could rid himself of her through execution by a civil court.

3. Divorce of a War Bride

The third passage is not well known. The law of warfare required the Israelites to execute all the males of any nation outside of Canaan that refused corporately to surrender before a war broke out (Deut. 20:13). The females were to be spared (v. 14). It was lawful for an Israelite to marry one of these captive women (Deut. 21:13). If a man married such a woman, and then grew tired of her for any reason, he could divorce her (v. 14). She then went free. She could not be sold (v. 14). This was because she was no longer a slave. Her adoption into his family through marriage had liberated her from her slave status. A divorce could not place her back into slave status. It was easy to divorce a former captive. Her husband had to prove nothing.

4. Victim's Rights

A husband faced two major negative institutional sanctions for divorcing his wife: the loss of the use of the divorced wife's dowry for family investing and the loss of his children.

The dowry was hers, not his. Rebekah's dowry was hers, not Isaac's. Abraham through his servant had given her the dowry. "And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things" (Gen. 24:53). This implies that a wife divorced by writ took out of the marriage the wealth that she had brought into it from her family, for no court of law had convicted her of any crime. Wealth was familistic under the Mosaic tribal system (Num. 36:6–9).[7] By adopting her into his family, her husband had gained the use of her wealth. As a now-disinherited wife, he could no longer lay claim to her family's wealth. He had to return it to her, which might not have been easy if it had been used to purchase an illiquid asset,[8] such as a long-term lease of land. She would have been entitled to the return of assets of equal value, including liquidity, to the assets she had brought in. However, if the woman was a concubine—a married woman without a dowry—she received nothing.

Which parent gained legal authority over the children? There is no written law governing this matter. The one biblical example that we have is the pre-Mosaic case of Hagar and Ishmael. Abraham sent both of them away. But this had been Sarah's command: she did not want Ishmael to inherit (Gen. 21:12–13). So, this example—the mother who received the children—is authoritative only by default.

A stronger case rests on the principle of victim's rights. Because the wife had not been convicted by a court, she was the victimized party. Her husband's word had unilaterally ended her marriage. Also, Jesus identified the husbands as hardhearted. He spoke on God's behalf. I interpret this law accordingly. So, the wife would have been entitled to take the children with her if she chose to, which she probably did. The husband bore a risk for unilaterally divorcing her: the loss of their children. This would have been an incentive for him to overlook her infraction, which he was morally supposed to do anyway.

C. The Theology of New Testament Divorce

The New Testament's doctrine of divorce begins with God's lawful divorce of Old Covenant Israel. Jesus brought a covenant lawsuit

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7. Gary North, *Sanctions and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Numbers*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1997] 2012), ch. 22.

8. A perfectly liquid asset is defined as an asset that can be exchanged for money without advertising costs, delay, or offering a discount to the buyer. Money is commonly defined as the most liquid asset.

against Israel, a faithless wife. Israel had pursued false gods ever since the days of the judges (Jud. 2:12–13). Jesus charged Israel with long-term covenant-breaking. Israel had also been a murderous nation, Jesus said, and would prove itself murderous after His departure.

> Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that **ye are the children of them which killed the prophets**. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I **send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify**; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, **thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee**, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate (Matt. 23:29–38).

Divorce is a covenantal act in response to a covenant-breaking act. What kind of act? Let us begin our discussion with a consideration of capital crimes.

A person who is married to someone who has committed a capital crime is to be delivered from the marriage by the execution of the criminal spouse by the civil government. This is divorce by execution. Conviction for having committed a capital crime, as defined by the Mosaic law, would have led to the execution of the perpetrator. This would have released the spouse from any further legal obligation to the deceased spouse. This judicial release would also have transferred the assets of the deceased criminal the spouse. The now-released spouse then had the right to remarry.

We see this system best in the ministry of Jesus. His ministry involved corporate condemnation. Israel, Jesus said, had repeatedly committed murder. God would soon deliver Himself from His marriage to Old Covenant Israel by means of a public divorce. This would be followed by Israel's execution.

The crucifixion of Jesus was Israel's consummate act of murder. Jesus had foretold it.

> Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet (Matt. 21:33–46).[9]

God's transfer of His kingdom from Old Covenant Israel to the institutional church was grounded judicially in the biblical principle of divorce by execution. God did not divorce Old Covenant Israel merely by writing a bill of divorcement and sending her away, the way that Joseph was ready to deal with Mary (Matt. 1:19). Instead, God executed Old Covenant Israel in A.D. 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed by Rome.[10] This was done in a judicial context. Israel had been warned. Jesus brought a covenant lawsuit against Israel that constituted God's public announcement: "Guilty as charged." The proof of Israel's guilt, Jesus announced, would be His own execution at the hands of Israel. The parable said that Israel would kill the son of the land owner, who had come as the agent of his father to secure a rendering of accounts from the husbandmen. The land owner would then retaliate. "He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him

9. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 43.

10. David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987).

the fruits in their seasons" (v. 41). This would terminate the Holy Land. Its status as holy—set apart by God—would be removed. The kingdom, which was Old Covenant Israel's inheritance, would then go to the church. "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (v. 43).

National Israel countered Jesus' covenant lawsuit against the nation by bringing a covenant lawsuit against Him, and then by securing His execution. This fulfilled part of Jesus' prophecy, namely, the execution of the son.

There was another part of this prophecy: Israel's murder of a new generation of prophets.

> Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation (Matt. 23:34–36).

Israel's subsequent actions after Jesus had delivered this prophecy-lawsuit confirmed that Israel had been the object of His lawsuit. They executed Stephen (Acts 7). This was a prelude to mass persecution of the church. "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles" (Acts 8:1). This was sufficient evidence to warrant God's covenantal divorce of Israel.

The first public announcement of the transfer of God's kingdom to the church came early in the Book of Acts. Peter announced this transfer in his first presentation of the covenant lawsuit against Israel. First, he described the church members' speaking in tongues as the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16).[11] Second, he identified Israel's capital crime. "There-

11. Peter said that the church was founded by the fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy. This text refutes the claim by conventional dispensationalists that no Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled in the New Testament era of the church. The dispensationalists' theory of the church era as a "great parenthesis," unknown to the Old Testament, is refuted by this verse. This fact was recognized by J. C. O'Hair and Cornelius Stam in the 1940s, who jointly developed ultradispensationalism: the church as the work of Paul's evangelism, not Peter's. What Peter founded in Acts 8 was not the church, Stam taught. Stam, *Things That Differ: The Fundamentals of Dispensationalism* (Stephens Point, Wisconsin: Worsalla, 1951).

fore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). In his second presentation, Peter announced that there is only one way to salvation. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). This meant that Israel was now lawfully divorced.

Execution was delayed until Jesus' prophecy of Israel's persecution of the next group of prophets—agents of the church—was fulfilled. Final judgment came for Israel in A.D. 70. This event fulfilled Jesus' prophecy, "Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23:36–38).

While it was lawful for a man under the Mosaic law to divorce his wife for infractions other than capital crimes, Jesus made it plain that this loose view of marriage had not been God's standard originally. "He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so" (Matt. 19:8). This passage does not refer to the practice of polygamy, but it is associated judicially with Peter's covenant lawsuit against Old Covenant Israel. Peter's lawsuit rested on two judicial principles: (1) God's divorce of convicted Israel; (2) the identification of the church as God's only bride. This was why he mandated baptism. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:38–39). Baptism replaced circumcision as the New Covenant's mark of adoption into the kingdom of God, i.e., membership in the bride of Christ.[12]

12. We must distinguish between *participation* in Christ's bride and *being* Christ's bride. Roman Catholic historian Leon Podles includes a chapter on what he calls bridal mysticism. Beginning in the twelfth century, this tradition within the Roman Catholic Church has confused Christ's love of the church as His bride with a concept not taught in the Bible, Christ's love of the individual Christian as His bride. He presents a strong case for bridal mysticism as an important factor in the feminization of the Roman Church. A heterosexual man cannot easily relate to the idea of being loved individually by Christ as a husband loves his bride. Mystical women, on the other hand, have responded positively to this imagery. Leon J. Podles, *The Church Impotent: The Feminization of Christianity* (Dallas, Texas: Spence, 1999), chaps. 6, 7.

This is the New Testament's application of the Mosaic law's principle of divorce by execution. But what of sins or crimes that are less heinous than capital crimes? What is the New Testament's view of their effect on the marriage covenant? To answer this, we must first understand Jesus' view of divorce and remarriage.

D. Jesus vs. the Mosaic Law of Remarriage

Jesus annulled the Deuteronomic law of divorce and remarriage. He replaced it with another law. He did so in three passages. We have already read these, but review is useful.

> It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery (Matt. 5:31–32).

> The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery (Matt. 19:3–9).

> And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery (Mark 10:10–12).

1. Matthew 5:31–32

Rushdoony's exposition of Matthew 5:32 is correct regarding the meaning of the Greek word translated as "fornication." It is not the Greek word for "adultery." It connotes sins more general than copulation.[13] But Rushdoony was incorrect regarding Deuteronomy 24:1–2. He interpreted Jesus' words as a condemnation of the Jewish

13. Rushdoony, *Institutes*, pp. 406–11.

theologians for having made a rigorous Deuteronomic law more lax. "Jesus then proceeded *to reaffirm Deuteronomy 24:1–4*."[14] Also, "the law concerning marriage and divorce remains one throughout Scripture. The cultural particulars as reflected in the law can and do change, but the law itself does not."[15] This is incorrect, both here and as a general principle of interpretation.

Rushdoony argued that this Deuteronomic law was rigorous, while the rabbis loosened it dramatically. He cited Alfred Edersheim's comments on how lax the divorce laws were in the teachings of the rabbis in Jesus' day.[16] But this divorce law was lax in Moses' day, too. It granted a greater degree of unilateral authority to husbands than what had prevailed prior to Moses, as well as what is mandatory today. This was what Rushdoony denied. He never dealt with the central judicial issue in the Pharisees' challenge to Jesus: the bill of divorce. This divorce action was administered unilaterally by the husband. There is no hint in the text of Deuteronomy that any court had to approve this unilateral divorce or that any court could override it. This laxness, Jesus said, was allowed by the Mosaic law because of the hardness of the husbands' hearts.

Rushdoony did not acknowledge the sharp judicial discontinuity that the New Covenant has established in the law of divorce and remarriage, a discontinuity that the disciples immediately recognized. He denied that Jesus had changed the Mosaic law of divorce and remarriage. It is difficult to understand how he could have ignored the obvious. Jesus did change this two-part law. As we shall see, He equalized the divorce law for husbands and wives. He also changed the law regarding the remarriage of a divorce-initiating marriage partner, who cannot lawfully remarry under the New Covenant. Jesus called such remarriage adulterous.

Rushdoony was also incorrect about the reason for any change in any Mosaic law, which he said was cultural. Many Mosaic laws have been changed, not just their cultural setting. When Jesus' death and resurrection definitively terminated all covenantal aspects of the tribes, the Promised Land, and the Levitical priesthood, this necessarily also terminated much of the Mosaic legislation, which was tied to these three aspects of the Mosaic Covenant.

14. *Ibid*., p. 410.

15. *Ibid*., p. 414.

16. Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 2 vols. (New York: Longmans, Green, 1897), II, p. 332–33; in Rushdoony, *ibid*., pp. 409–10.

On what judicial basis did Jesus do this? As the new high priest. The New Covenant annulled the Levitical priesthood and restored the Melchizedekal (Heb. 7). Jesus is the high priest, the epistle to the Hebrews says, even though He was born into the tribe of Judah, not priestly Levi.

2. Matthew 19:3–9

Here, Jesus made other modifications. In this revision of the Mosaic law, He identified as adulterous any marriage between a man and a lawfully divorced wife (v. 9). Under the Mosaic law, a unilaterally divorced wife could lawfully remarry anyone except a priest, as we shall see.

In this passage, Jesus added another restriction: *no remarriage is lawful for a man who has unilaterally divorced his wife*. "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery" (v. 9a). In this example, a man has divorced his wife for something other than fornication. He therefore may not lawfully remarry. This means that *the divorce was lawful*, just as it was in Deuteronomy 24:1. What is unlawful is his remarriage.

Jesus was responding here to the laxity of the Mosaic law. Jesus tightened it. Adultery was a capital crime under the Mosaic law. Jesus did not annul the penal sanction for adultery: execution. No other New Testament passage annulled it, either. Therefore, because Jesus here defined as adulterous any remarriage by the initiator following a unilateral divorce, a divorced wife can bring lawful charges against her ex-husband and his new wife. She can demand their execution. This was not true under the Mosaic Covenant.

3. Mark 10:10–12

This is the crucial New Testament passage on divorce and remarriage, yet it is the one least known. "And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." *Here, Jesus radically altered the Mosaic law of divorce.* Under the Mosaic law, only a husband had the right of unilateral divorce by means of a written document. Under the New Covenant, the wife also has the right to secure a unilateral divorce by writ.

Why the judicial change? The text does not say, but there is an obvious answer: *baptism*. Both males and females are adopted into the family of God's church through baptism. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Jesus have put on Jesus. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Jesus Christ" (Gal. 3:27–28). *Baptism has established the principle of gender equality before the law*. Women were not baptized in the Old Covenant, so in the area of divorce and remarriage, there had not been equality before the law.

Jesus applied the remarriage law equally to husbands and wives. "And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery" (vv. 11–12). *Both parties have the right of unilateral divorce, and both are forbidden to remarry*. If the divorcing partner leaves a spouse for anything but a sexual crime in the broadest sense ("fornication"), he or she cannot not lawfully remarry.

Christians should uphold three judicial positions on divorce and remarriage. First, adultery remains a capital crime in the New Covenant. No New Testament law has changed this Mosaic Covenant civil sanction. Second, Jesus identified as adulterous the remarriage of a divorcing spouse who did not prove in a civil or ecclesiastical court that the now-divorced spouse had committed fornication. Third, the victim—the unconvicted divorced spouse—can demand anything up to the death penalty for an ex-spouse who remarries. This would also include the execution of the new spouse. Under such a threat, the number of available partners for people who had initiated a no-trial divorce would be highly restricted.

Did Jesus authorize divorce for anything other than fornication in the broadest sense, i.e., committing a capital crime? I see no way around it: He did. A person who initiates what we today call a no-fault divorce cannot lawfully remarry, according to Jesus. Nevertheless, Jesus did not say that a person may not initiate a divorce. He mentioned no negative sanction for obtaining a no-trial divorce, nor is there any implication that a negative sanction should be imposed, other than the loss of the children, as implied by the Mosaic Covenant. But in the New Covenant, a wife can initiate the divorce, so she must pay the price of losing her children, just as the divorcing husband did in the Mosaic Testament. What requires a negative civil sanction is an adulterous remarriage. Conclusion: *the New Testament authorizes unilat-*

eral no-trial divorce and deadly fault remarriage for the initiator. A person can lawfully get out of a misery-inducing marriage, but only at the price of permanently single status. The divorced spouse can lawfully remarry. There is a judicial distinction between the initiator and the victim. The unilaterally divorced spouse must be presumed innocent if the divorce was not a matter of a court-proven sin.

Again, let me reaffirm my original assertion, namely, that divorce and remarriage are a judicial unit in the Bible. The laws of divorce cannot legitimately be considered apart from the laws of remarriage, and vice versa. This was true of Deuteronomy 24:1–4, and it is equally true of Jesus' reformulation of the laws of divorce and remarriage. Any critic of my view of the legitimacy of unilateral no-trial divorce under the New Testament who does not also discuss my insistence on the capital sanction for the remarriage of the initiator of a no-trial divorce is an intellectual cheat and a charlatan. (I say this, frankly, because so many critics of theonomy have been intellectual cheats and charlatans.)[17]

My interpretation represents a major break with traditional Bible commentators. I have not come to this conclusion because I wish to compromise with my divorce-prone era. I have rarely been one to compromise with much of anything in my era. I have come to this conclusion regarding no-trial divorce because I see no textually based way around it. Jesus did not place a "no remarriage" restriction on all divorced people. He placed a "no remarriage" restriction on all those who initiate and secure a no-trial divorce—the same kind of divorce that Moses authorized in Deuteronomy 24:1–4. In Deuteronomy 24:2, a wife who had been divorced by her husband had the right to remarry. She had been the victim. She had not been proven guilty of a capital crime in a court of law. She had been unilaterally divorced. Her husband had obtained a no-trial divorce, i.e., no fault on her part had been proven in a court.

Jesus tightened this law in two ways. First, He forbade the divorcing spouse to remarry, on threat of execution and excommunication for adultery. Second, He opened the legal door for wives to initiate a no-trial divorce. In the New Covenant era, husbands must also toe the line, not just wives. Husbands must bear the risk of getting booted unilaterally. The hardness of hearts, Jesus thereby has announced, is no longer limited to men. It is now extended to women. But He

17. Yes, I know: scholars are not supposed to say such things. As to who laid down this rule, nobody knows, but it surely helps intellectual cheats and charlatans.

placed a negative sanction against hardhearted initiators of a no-trial divorce: a permanent ban on their remarriage. This form of hard-heartedness has a high price in the New Covenant.

What about soft hearts of covenant-keepers? The covenant-keeper who believes that his or her calling, testimony, or dominion is being thwarted by a spouse has the right to break the marriage vow and adopt a life of celibacy. The divorced spouse receives authority over the children. The divorced spouse receives a joint share of the marriage's assets. The divorced spouse is free to remarry. The divorced spouse also possesses authority to bring formal charges against the ex-spouse, should the ex-spouse remarry. But there is a lawful escape from a bad marriage: celibacy.

Because of baptism's replacement of circumcision, all women have been elevated to equality with men judicially, with one exception: a right to hold any office in the church that authorizes them to speak in church. They are not allowed to speak in church worship services.[18] This otherwise extensive equality applies beyond ecclesiastical law. It applies across the range of the kingdom of God, which includes civil government and family government. *Nowhere is the New Covenant's extension of equality before the law more clearly seen than in the law of divorce and remarriage*. The implication for divorce and remarriage is that both parties possess equal judicial authority to initiate a no-trial divorce, and both suffer the same penalty for remarriage.

E. Victim's Rights and No-Trial Divorce

The judicial principle of victim's rights is the governing principle of biblical law. This principle rests on the identification of God as the victim of sin and crime, from the rebellion of Adam (Gen. 3) to the final rebellion of Satan (Rev. 20:9–10). A victim has the right to press charges, just as God presses charges from the garden of Eden until the final judgment (Rev. 20:14–15). A victim also has the legal right to show mercy by not pressing charges, just as Jesus did. "And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots" (Luke 23:33–34).

18. "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (I Cor. 14:34–35).

Covenant-keepers should always ask in any judicial dispute: "Who is the victim?" The victim of a unilateral divorce under the Mosaic law was the wife. We know this because of what Jesus told the Pharisees. "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so" (Matt. 19:8). The divorced wife's status as a victim was why she had the right to marry again under the Mosaic law. She had not been condemned by a civil court. She had not been found guilty of a capital crime. Her husband had not attained divorce by execution.

An innocent party should not be penalized judicially by either church or state. *The New Testament's laws governing divorce are also governed by the principle of victim's rights.* A victimized spouse should not be penalized by either church or state.

The modern world rarely imposes the negative sanction required by the Bible in the case of capital crimes: execution. Sometimes a biblical capital crime is not regarded by the state as a crime, e.g., blasphemy. This places the spouses of capital criminals at a great disadvantage. Many churches teach that innocent spouses must remain legally bound for life to these covenant-breakers. *The legal solution to this problem is for both church and state to regard the criminal spouse as covenantally dead.* With respect to the marital bond, the legal status of being covenantally deceased due to a conviction for having committed a capital crime should be the judicial equivalent of physical death. The innocent spouse should gain control over all of the family's property and also the children, just as if the criminal were literally dead. The state should enforce this transfer.

Jesus did not sentence unilaterally divorced wives to the single life, nor did He sentence unilaterally divorced husbands to a life without marriage. *The initiator comes under the restriction, not the victim.* Jesus made it clear that there are valid grounds for divorce. The key word is "except." Jesus said, "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19:9).

It is not adulterous for the victim to remarry after a court has put away a spouse for fornication, which is not the same as adultery. This is true whether the victimized spouse is male or female. The victim has rights. The victim is not to suffer because of the fornicator. Just because one spouse commits fornication, there is no obligation for the other spouse to remain with the sinner, or to remain single forever

because of the victim's legal separation from the sinner, whose sin had broken the marriage covenant.[19]

Consider Jesus' words: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery" (Mark 10:11b–12). Here, He offered no exception based on fornication. He did not need to; He had already offered it elsewhere. He was not speaking here of deadly fault divorce, i.e., divorce based on the spouse's commission of a capital crime or sexual deviation. He was speaking here of no-trial divorce. *The spouse who initiated a no-trial divorce did not do so on the basis of court-convicted fornication by the now-divorced partner*. To argue that Jesus was condemning every partner who initiates a divorce, even when the divorced spouse is a court-convicted fornicator, is to argue that a victimized spouse can never lawfully remarry after the divorce is granted by the authorities. This violates the principle of victim's rights.

Who is prohibited from remarrying? Five kinds of people. *First*, a spouse who is lawfully executed for having committed a capital crime. *Second*, a spouse who has been convicted of having committed such a crime, but who has been shown mercy by the victim. The victim has the right to tell the civil court, "No remarriage; otherwise, execute." *Third*, a spouse who has committed what the Bible identifies as a capital crime, but which the legally responsible civil court refuses to acknowledge is a capital crime. The innocent marriage partner then divorces the criminal. The civil court should prohibit the lawfully divorced criminal from remarrying. If the civil court refuses to enforce this, then a church court should excommunicate any convicted spouse upon remarriage, assuming that the church has not already excommunicated the person for having committed the crime. The victim is then allowed to remarry. *Fourth*, a person who has committed sexual infractions that may not be capital crimes, but which have broken the marriage in the opinion of the victimized spouse. An addiction to pornography would qualify, or constant demands for the partner to perform sexual acts that the partner regards as deviant, where the court agrees. *Fifth*, a spouse who has initiated a no-trial divorce.

The Protestant church has long regarded desertion as valid legal grounds for divorce. This is the correct conclusion, but for the wrong reason. *The deserter has initiated a no-trial divorce*. Civil and ecclesias-

19. Ray R. Sutton, *Second Chance: Biblical Blueprints for Divorce and Remarriage* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987).

tical authorities should formally identify desertion as a unilateral no-trial divorce. The deserter must not be allowed to remarry. The deserted spouse should be allowed to remarry.

The spouse who wishes to be identified as the victim of a no-trial divorce should be allowed by law to oppose the divorce. This will not save the marriage, but it establishes the divorce as unilateral. If both parties agree to the no-fault divorce, then neither should be allowed to remarry. This is why a deserted spouse should protest to a court.

What about child-support payments? If the deserter is employed, he or she owes child support until the child reaches adulthood at age 20 (Ex. 30:14) or else marries, whichever event takes place first. The deserted spouse is a legal victim, in the same way that the divorced wife in the Mosaic Covenant was a legal victim. The economic burden of support should fall on the deserter. If the deserter is the wife, she owes payment. If she remarries, she has committed adultery. Her ex-husband should be allowed to demand her execution and her new husband's execution. But, as a matter of mercy, he may prefer to extract child-support payments from the wife and her new husband. If she quits her job, her new husband must take over the obligation.

What about the distribution of property? Assets should be divided according to whoever owned which assets before the marriage. In a legal system which establishes jointly owned property, which I think is the New Testament's norm—baptism's equality applied to capital—the deserted party should automatically receive half of the couple's assets.

What about alimony? The deserted party should receive half of the after-tax earned income generated by the deserter until such time as the deserted party remarries. This protects the deserted party. It also makes the deserter less capable of finding another spouse. Of course, if the state enforces capital punishment for the deserter's remarriage, this sanction should be sufficient to scare away a new partner.

If there are no sanctions, there is no law. The death penalty for the remarriage of the initiator of a no-trial divorce should always be an option for the divorced spouse to require. The New Testament's authorization of no-trial divorces must be accompanied by the civil sanction for adultery: the execution of both remarriage partners.

F. Continuity and Discontinuity in Biblical Law

On what judicial basis did Jesus annul the Mosaic laws of divorce and remarriage? On the basis of *a change in the priesthood*. Here is the New

Testament's principle of judicial revision: "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Heb. 7:12). "So also Jesus glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Heb. 5:5–6). Jesus, as both the son of God and the eternal high priest, possessed the God-given authority to change the Mosaic law.

The Mosaic law as a system died and was buried with Jesus. In this sense, those who argue for the complete annulment of the Mosaic law are correct. This took place at the crucifixion and burial of Jesus. Its visible sign was the top-to-bottom tearing of the curtain that separated the holy of holies from the world.

> Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many (Matt. 27:50–53).

What the defenders of total judicial discontinuity ignore is the judicial implication of bodily resurrection, which began, not with Jesus' resurrection, but with the resurrections of the saints around Jerusalem. This was a public declaration by God the Father that death is no longer universal in its authority. The ultimate sanction of God's law was no longer universal from that point forward. This raises a crucial point: there is no law without a sanction. *When the sanction changes, the law also changes*. Death had always been the Old Covenant law's representative sanction. "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). This resurrection of saints revealed a definitive break with the Old Covenant's legal order, including its sanctions.

Jesus proclaimed the permanence of the Mosaic law as a system. His death culminated with the perfect fulfillment of the law that He spoke about in Matthew 5:17–19. Immediately after His death, there was a complete discontinuity with the Old Covenant and its legal order: resurrection from the dead of corpses buried near Jerusalem. This mass resurrection announced the end of the Old Covenant, for it announced the definitive end of the older law's sanction: death.

Yet death still reigns. The form of the old sanction is with us still. Yet the legal order which originally imposed death was publicly over-

turned by the resurrection of the saints, and then confirmed by the resurrection of Christ. There is a legal order that still imposes the sanction of death. Conclusion: *a new legal order was resurrected with Jesus, one which re-imposed the old sanction*. There was a break with the Old Covenant law (discontinuity), yet there has been a re-imposition of law (continuity). Then in what way was there a meaningful discontinuity? By the permanent annulment of most of the Mosaic statutes. Not resurrected with Jesus Christ were the Mosaic land laws,[20] which pertained to Israel's geography, and the seed laws,[21] which regulated Israel's tribal system. Also annulled were the laws of cleanliness and diet, which were associated with the priestly laws, sometimes called ceremonial laws.[22] Resurrected with Christ were the cross-boundary laws,[23] sometimes called moral laws. These moral laws retain their binding nature, but are now *laws of life* as a result of the resurrection.

Death still reigns, which means that God's law still reigns. The old sanction is with us still because the old man in Adam is with us still. But there have been substantive changes in the legal order. There has been a radical discontinuity with the Mosaic law—as radical as the mass resurrection of dead bodies.

As surely as Jesus Christ's resurrected body was fundamentally different from the body that had been crucified, so is the law of God. The disciples did not recognize who He was on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:16). Soon thereafter, He appeared without warning. "And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit" (Luke 24:36–37). Yet He looked the same. "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet" (Luke 24:39–40). His body had both continuity and discontinuity with history. As surely as Jesus still was recognizably Jesus after the meeting on the road to Emmaus, so is the law of God recognizable today. Jesus was still Jesus. The law is still the law. Yet there have been changes.

This same analysis also applies to redeemed men. There has been a definitive break with the old man of sin, Adam's doomed heir. "There-

20. North, *Boundaries and Dominion*, Conclusion:C:1(a).
21. *Ibid.*, Conclusion:C:1(b).
22. *Ibid.*, Conclusion:C:2.
23. *Ibid.*, Conclusion:C:3.

fore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). Yet these spiritually resurrected men look the same as they did before. There has been *a definitive break with the old man*, as surely as there has been *a definitive break with the Old Covenant*. What is true of redeemed men is also true of redeemed Mosaic laws. It is not that the law now gives life. It is that redemption's new life quickens the law. Definitive sanctification—God's transfer to each redeemed person of all of Jesus' moral perfection at the time of his redemption—produces progressive sanctification in history and final sanctification in eternity: victory over sin and death.[24]

My analysis of the continuity and discontinuity in biblical law puts me in conflict with Greg Bahnsen's discussion of theonomy. I see a much greater discontinuity between the Mosaic laws of divorce and remarriage than he did. He, like Rushdoony, denied any discontinuity at all in the marriage laws. Therefore, I also see a problem in arguing for the continuity of the whole of biblical law. I see a fundamental judicial break at the resurrection, which was manifested by the public removal of the sanction of death.

G. A Critique of Bahnsen's Interpretation

Bahnsen agreed with Rushdoony's interpretation of the meaning of the bill of divorce, namely, that Jesus was challenging the views of the Pharisees, who were lax. Both men argued that Jesus was calling the Pharisees back to the Mosaic law. This argument, as I have shown, cannot be sustained logically or exegetically. Because Bahnsen rarely made logical errors—at least none that normal mortals could detect—I conclude that this error was theologically driven. He was so persuaded of the theological necessity of sustaining continuity of the Mosaic law in Matthew 5 that he refused to admit the obvious, namely, that Jesus annulled, repudiated, and generally smashed into smithereens the Mosaic law of divorce by bill of divorce.

Bahnsen wrote, "When we turn to the antithesis on divorce we again find no grounds for asserting that Jesus breaks with the outlook of God's inspired word."[25] Technically, this is correct, for Jesus Himself is God's inspired word (John 1:1). But this has nothing to do with

24. Chapter 10:A:1.

25. Greg L. Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, 3rd ed. (Nacogdoches, Texas: Covenant Media Press, 2002), p. 99.

the relevant theological issues of this text. The theological question for all schools of orthodox Christian interpretation is this: Which outlook of God's inspired word, revealed when? That is, does the continuity of God's outlook demand a continuity of laws? If it does, then there is no judicial discontinuity, and therefore no escape from every jot and tittle of the Mosaic law, including the priestly laws—a position that Bahnsen explicitly denied.[26]

The primary theological issue for theonomists that is raised by Matthew 5:31–32 and 19:3–9 is whether Jesus broke with the Mosaic law on the twin issues of divorce by bill of divorcement and the divorced wife's lawful remarriage. This is the heart of the matter, hermeneutically speaking. Bahnsen not only refused to acknowledge this, he did his rhetorical best to deflect the reader's attention from the judicially related issues. He did not do this often, so when we find him doing it, we should pay close attention. Whenever we find Bahnsen deflecting the reader's attention away from an obvious theological issue raised by some text, focusing instead on other issues, we should assume that he was having a text-related problem with his hermeneutic. He never had any problem with logic.

1. Bahnsen and Rushdoony

Bahnsen adopted the same line of reasoning that Rushdoony did. He cited Rushdoony on the judicial issue of fornication as grounds for divorce: an essay that had been published in the never-completed *Encyclopedia of Christianity* (1972).[27] Bahnsen added this footnote after the first draft of the manuscript had been completed. We know this because he finished the first draft no later than the fall of 1971, at the age of 23. (How intelligent does that make you feel?) Rushdoony wrote the Foreword in October, 1971.[28] Publication was delayed by a combination of factors: a publisher who let the manuscript sit on his desk for over a year, and a typesetter who took over four years to typeset it.

Bahnsen wrote: "While some have alleged to find a repudiation of Older Testament morality here, in actuality it was the hardhearted and distorted interpretation put forward by the Pharisees that Jesus reproved, not the law itself."[29] This was also Rushdoony's argument.

26. See Bahnsen's Preface to the Second Edition, p. xxiv.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 111, footnote 34.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. xi–xiv.
29. *Idem.*

The Pharisees were indeed hardhearted, but this was not the moral issue in Matthew 19:3–9. Jesus told the Pharisees what the moral issue was: Israelite men had been hardhearted from the beginning of the nation at Sinai, and God had written the Mosaic law to fit their moral condition. Hardhearted or not, no Israelite husband had broken God's revealed law by unilaterally divorcing his wife, presenting her with a bill of divorcement, after she had lost favor in his eyes because of her uncleanness. Jesus ended this marital option for hardhearted, covenant-keeping men—not men in "an unregenerate state (Deut. 10:16)," as Bahnsen claimed.[30]

Bahnsen continued: "It might be suggested that, while Jesus did not in any way relax the law, nevertheless He altered it by abrogating the alleged permissiveness of the Older Testament with respect to *divorce*."[31] Not only might it be suggested, I am suggesting it. "The supposition is that by strengthening the law He contradicted the attitude of Moses."[32] Jesus did not contradict the attitude of Moses, but He surely announced the end of God's toleration of hardhearted Israelite husbands, whose forefathers had vexed Moses for four decades.

"It is helpful to study the passages from Matthew 5 and 19 in connection with each other." This can indeed be helpful, but not all those who study these two passages reach the same conclusion. "Jesus there redressed this scribal abuse of Deuteronomy 24 and confirms the original teaching by God's holy law."[33] This is true regarding the *original* teaching of God's holy law, but it is not true with respect to the teaching of Deuteronomy 24:1–4, in which God softened His original law for the sake of Israelites' hard hearts. This was how Jesus explained the law of the bill of divorcement, and Bahnsen owed it to his readers to adjust the application of his judicial hermeneutic to this text.

At this point, we find Bahnsen using a debater's technique to deflect the reader's attention. I do not recall any other example comparable to it in his exegetical materials. "While Jesus stressed the hallowed nature of the marriage covenant, the scribes were more interested in the 'bill of divorcement' (which the Mosaic law mentioned only *in passing*) and the *exception* to God's creation ordinance."[34] Mentioned only in passing? The theonomic hermeneutic, more than any hermeneutic in the history of the church, has no judicial use for the concept

30. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 99–100.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
33. *Idem.*
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 100–1.

of "mentioned only in passing." The bill of divorcement was there in the Mosaic law. The scribes quoted the text accurately to Jesus. The disciples also understood the magnitude of the change that Jesus was demanding by abolishing that divorce option. It shocked them. It stupefied them. "If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry" (Matt. 19:10).

Bahnsen wrote: "*From the very beginning* God's law had taken a strict view of marriage."[35] This is what Jesus taught: "from the beginning it was not so" (Matt. 19:8b). Jesus was reimposing on covenant-keepers what had been God's original view, but which the Mosaic law had suspended as a legal requirement. Jesus was making it as plain as possible that the Mosaic law had been, in this instance, a temporary weakening of the original preference of God, and God would now require church and state to return to the law's original view. The New Testament's texts regarding divorce are clear. Jesus annulled, i.e., repudiated, a section of the Mosaic law: the bill of divorcement and the right of both of the ex-partners to remarry—and, as we shall see, the husband's right to be married to two women at the same time.

The Pharisees extracted from Jesus a public affirmation which, as they had hoped, repudiated a section of the Mosaic law. The issue textually is not whether He had repudiated the unbreakable nature of the Mosaic law. He did indeed break with the Mosaic law at this point. The decisive issue was His authority to do this. The primary public judicial issue of His entire ministry was point two of the biblical covenant model: authority. The Jews kept asking him: "By what authority do you break with the Mosaic law and not deserve judgment?" The Gospel of John makes this aspect of the confrontation clearer than the synoptic gospels do. The issue of authority came to the forefront because of point three: biblical law. It would be settled by point four: sanctions. Whose sanctions would prove determinative: the crucifixion or Jesus' judgment? Israel received a preliminary answer in A.D. 70.[36]

2. Continuity and Intrusion

Bahnsen interpreted Matthew 5:17–19 as a defense of the continuity of God's moral law. I, too, hold this view. But, in Jesus' declaration regarding the bill of divorcement, He made it plain to His

35. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

36. David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987).

contemporaries that the Mosaic law contained an "intrusion," as Meredith Kline calls such judicial events, that was in fact *a deviation from the original moral law of God*. This is the implication of Jesus' phrase, "the hardness of your hearts." Jesus restored the original intent of the moral law of God by tightening the judicial categories governing divorce and remarriage. The disciples were as shocked at this revocation of the Mosaic law as the Pharisees were appalled . . . and no doubt pleased.

Bahnsen categorically denied such a view of the Mosaic law of divorce. Most important strategically, he did not comment on remarriage.

> Thus far we have noted that a *lax* attitude toward divorce is not found in Jesus or the Older Testament but in the doctrine of the Pharisees, that the Pharisees *distorted* the law (through inaccurate emphasis, quotation, and interpretation), that Jesus appealed to the Older Testament to *substantiate* His moral evaluation of divorce, and that He *refuted* any insinuation to the effect that He contravened one portion of the Older Testament by appealing to another portion.[37]

Compare Bahnsen's argument, which denied any contrast between Jesus' view and the text of Deuteronomy 24:1–4, with Jesus' words of comparison.

> And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

The key words are these: *from the beginning it was not so*.

Bahnsen refused to refer to the fact that a wife divorced by means of a bill of divorcement has the right to remarry. The judicial scope of this law cannot legitimately be confined to a consideration of the husband's means of divorce. It must extend to the lawful remarriage of a divorced wife. Bahnsen confined his discussion only to divorce. Here is the problem exegetically with his judicial approach. The sin of uncleanness was not a civil crime under the Mosaic law, although it was a moral infraction of some kind, though the Deuteronomic text does

37. Bahnsen, *Theonomy*, p. 105.

not say what it was. Therefore, the civil government could neither apply the capital sanction to her nor prevent the divorce from taking place. Neither could the church. Most important, another Israelite could lawfully marry her.

The law of Deuteronomy 24:1–4 dealt with a different judicial question entirely: a remarriage of the original partners after the second husband divorced her. This was illegal. Conclusion: it was easy for a man to obtain a divorce under the Mosaic law—so easy, that the Mosaic law dealt with a possible event relating to such a trial-free divorce: the future remarriage of the divorced partners. This, not the divorce or the wife's first remarriage, was illegal.

The issue of lawful remarriage raises this crucial theological question: *Did the Mosaic law subsidize criminal behavior*? This was a crucial issue—judicially central to Deuteronomy 24—that Bahnsen refused to deal with. If the answer is *no*, then the woman's infraction was not a crime. Her uncleanness was surely minor when compared to adultery, bestiality, and other sexual crimes that required the death penalty. On the other hand, if the answer is *yes*, then theonomy's hermeneutic is in deep trouble. I would go so far as to say that it would be unsalvageable. It would make God the author of a new commandment: "Go, thou, and sin some more."

3. Judicial Maturation

In Matthew 5:31–32 and 19:3–9, Jesus established a fundamental judicial principle that should have been understood by the Pharisees: *God's revealed law matured over time, from Adam to Jesus*. The Mosaic law introduced an element of moral laxity—an intrusion—which Jesus identified specifically. Jesus introduced a more rigorous moral order for God's New Testament covenant people. This moral tightening affected the civil law.

A concept of maturing civil law was nothing new in Jesus' day. For example, there had been a Mosaic inheritance law governing rural land that had been distributed to the conquest generation (Lev. 25:10).[38] When God removed the Israelites from the land during the exile, the Israelites broke continuity with the Mosaic law governing the jubilee year and rural land ownership. The jubilee law of inheritance was replaced by a new law that opened landed inheritance to gentiles residing in Israel at the time of the return. "So shall ye divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel. And it shall come

38. North, *Boundaries and Dominion*, ch. 25.

to pass, that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel" (Ezek. 47:21–22). There was family discontinuity of inheritance because there had been a discontinuity of family dominion in the land during the exile. The gentile caretakers of the land were not to be evicted. Thus, there was both continuity (dominion over land) and discontinuity (tribal family title). Dominion had its reward: inheritance.

Antinomians from Jesus' day until mine have argued that Jesus loosened or even repudiated the Mosaic law. He made it a lighter burden. He did, indeed, *by strengthening His people by sending the Holy Spirit.* Furthermore, biblical law for the redeemed strengthens them in their tasks of dominion, beginning with self-government. It was not that Jesus took away the heavy moral weights of God's biblical law. He added new weights, but He strengthened our lifting power. Bahnsen agreed with this view of empowering by the Holy Spirit.[39] But still he would not admit that, in the midst of his foundational hermeneutical passage, Matthew 5, Jesus introduced a view of divorce and remarriage that repudiated a Mosaic civil statute.

Why do I use the analogy of maturation? Because this was Paul's language. He compared certain details—the weak and beggarly elements (Gal. 4:9)—of the Mosaic law's authority over the Christian with the household tutors' authority over a minor son. This authority has ceased.

> Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Jesus (Gal. 4:1–7).

39. "Only the Holy Spirit of God can bring power to obey to the sinner, and that the Holy Spirit was received not by law-works but by faith" ([II Cor.] 3:2). Bahnsen, *Theonomy*, p. 134. "Because of the weakness of sinful human nature the law could not overcome sin's power, but in the believer the power of the Holy Spirit frees him from the power of sin unto death, thereby enabling him to accomplish what the law demands ([Rom.] 8:14)." *Ibid*., p. 136.

The Mosaic law unquestionably contained weak and beggarly elements. Bahnsen limited this phrase to the ceremonial law.[40] I do not. One of these weak and beggarly laws was the law of divorce by writ and the divorcer's right of remarriage, which was not ceremonial.

Bahnsen acknowledged discontinuity in the law, for he wrote in this section that "No word of God can be turned back except by divine authority,"[41] but for some reason, he resisted what I find an obvious revision of the Mosaic law, a revision that shocked the disciples because of its far-reaching implications for men's authority in marriage. This was no minor revision, they believed. I agree with them.

Why did Bahnsen resist judicial discontinuity at this point, yet not at others? I cannot ask him, but I can make an informed guess. The analytical and exegetical heart of his Th.M. thesis, as with the heart of *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, was his exegesis of Matthew 5:17–19. He defended a jot-and-tittle continuity in terms of the meaning of the Greek word, *plero-oh*. What is the meaning of this word? Bahnsen said it means "to fulfill."[42] But there can be many meanings here: end to, replace, supplement, obey, enforce, and confirm. Bahnsen offered a page of footnotes to cite examples.[43] He adopted "confirm" as the preferred translation.[44]

In an appendix added after the original manuscript had been sent to the publisher, Bahnsen attacked Meredith G. Kline's book, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (1972), in which Kline argued for a complete discontinuity between the Mosaic civil sanctions and the New Testament's silence regarding civil sanctions. In that book, Kline referred to a "revision which does not destroy but fulfills." Bahnsen went on the attack.

> To "fulfill" a legal statute by *altering it* certainly does not conform to any of the usual senses of the word "fulfill"; to substitute one piece of legislation for another and then call this "fulfillment" amounts to making "fulfill" a substitute for "abrogate."[45]

If Matthew 5:31–32 and Matthew 19:3–9 are a moral unit, which they are, then Jesus did to at least one Mosaic statute what Kline

40. Greg L. Bahnsen, *No Other Standard: Theonomy and Its Critics* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1991), pp. 87–88.

41. Bahnsen, *Theonomy*, p. 116.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 55n.

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 57 (citing Geerhardus Vos), 67 (along with "restore"), 70 (along with "establish"), 71–74, 87–88, 91, 94–95, 99, 103, 110, 120, 123, 141, 145, 154, 183–84.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 555.

said that He did to all of the Mosaic penal sanctions: He fulfilled the whole of the Mosaic law, yet He abrogated a Mosaic statute. Bahnsen could not admit this without rewriting his book. He had based his entire judicial hermeneutic on the definition of "fulfill" as "establish," "confirm," or "ratify."[46] To provide a consistent, all-encompassing definition of "fulfill" in Matthew 5 that included "abrogate" in Matthew 19 was too much for him in 1971. His hermeneutic needed additional work.[47] But he did not revise it over the next quarter century. He did not modify in any way his explanation of Matthew 5:17–19. He wrote in 1991, "It has sometimes been insinuated or explicitly charged by the critics of theonomic ethics that the position has been changed over the years—and changed so often or dramatically that we just cannot tell what theonomic ethics represents anymore. Such criticism is easier to speak than to substantiate. Indeed, it is simply a fabrication. And I should know. The essentials (and virtually all of the detailed argumentation) of the theonomic position have not been reversed, modified or changed in any significant way whatsoever."[48]

The idea of "confirm" is not far-fetched, but it is not the normal translation of *plero-oh*, which usually is translated as "fulfill." The meaning of "fulfill" seems closer to the idea of completing than confirming. It means "bringing to a close." It does not necessarily mean "abrogate." A process may be multi-stage. This depends on context.

The word is often eschatological in intent. This is not to say that eschatology is separated from ethics. Far be it from a theonomic postmillennialist to make that conclusion! But eschatology can refer to Christ's fulfilling both the ethical and liturgical requirements of the Mosaic law. The crucial question relates to the question of the timing of the fulfillment. What fulfills the Mosaic law? When was the Mosaic Law fulfilled, or when will it be fulfilled?

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46. *Ibid.*, ch. 2, especially pages 72–73.

47. The development of a hermeneutic for covenant theology is still a pressing need for theonomists, as it is for non-theonomists, just as a reconciliation of systematic theology and biblical theology is a pressing need for every school of biblical interpretation. Somewhere out there in the misty no-man's land in between Bahnsen and Jordan, we must seek both coherence and fruitfulness, just as we must seek both goals in the no-man's land in between Charles Hodge and Geerhardus Vos. Bahnsen and Hodge stood on the solid but rocky ground of integrated systems, where it is always hard plowing, and the soil is historically thin. Jordan, like Vos, has always preferred to work in the luxuriant swamp, where, within a few months, everything is covered by the kudzu of multiperspectivalism. As for me, I prefer to do my plowing in the misty middle distance, using Sutton's five-pointed plow. I cannot always see where I am going, but a crop comes in every year—sometimes several times a year.

48. Bahnsen, *No Other Standard*, p. 27.

4. The Meaning of "Until"

Bahnsen could not escape dealing with a crucial phrase—indeed, *the* crucial phrase—for his apologetic. Verse 18 reads: "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." As a defender of complete, unbreakable judicial continuity, Bahnsen concentrated on the use of the word, "until," but only in the first clause: "till heaven and earth pass." The problem that he faced, *and never successfully dealt with exegetically*, was judicial discontinuity. He acknowledged the existence of discontinuities. He even referred to some of the New Testament's changes as radical.

> What has been said above is simply that the presumption should be that an Old Testament law is binding in the New Testament. This does not in any way preclude or reject many radical differences between the Old and New Testaments. Changes do indeed come through the course of redemptive history, so that there certainly are exceptions to the general continuity that characterizes the relation between Old and New Covenants. God has the right to make alterations for the New Age. In the transition to this New Age we observe that advances are made over the Old Covenant, with some laws laid aside and some laws observed in a new fashion.[49]

Here is a judicial hermeneutic that is accepted by most Christians. The heresies are in the details. So is orthodoxy.

The fact is, most of the Mosaic law was annulled—abrogated, if you prefer—by the New Testament. If we read the Book of Leviticus, we find that little of it is still binding, for it deals with the ceremonial law, or what I call *priestly law*. It also deals with Israel's *land laws* and *seed laws*: inheritance. These tribal laws no longer are in force. I have already referred to this with regard to Ezekiel's abrogation of the jubilee law of family inheritance.

How can the Bible-affirming commentator justify both Matthew 5:19 and the abrogation of most of the Mosaic law by the New Covenant? Only by developing a theological system that accounts for both *the continuity and discontinuity of the jots and tittles*. The alternative is to adopt some form of liberal theology that affirms contradictions in the Bible, or mistakes in the ministry of prophets, from Moses to Jesus.

Jesus provided the solution to this dilemma in the second part of verse 18: "until all be fulfilled." The key word is "until." This word establishes a temporal limit. For example, "And from the days of John

49. Greg L. Bahnsen, *By This Standard: The Authority of God's Law Today* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1985), p. 4.

the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied **until** John” (Matt. 11:12–13). The central question for Bahnsen’s version of theonomy is this: To what law-abrogating event does Matthew 5:18’s temporal limit apply? There are three viable choices: the final judgment, the fall of Jerusalem, and the death of Jesus. The text reads: “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

Bahnsen insisted on the first application of “until,” i.e., “till heaven and earth pass.” He extended the time reference until the end of time: the final judgment.[50] “Every detail of God’s law has abiding validity from the time of Christ’s advent to the time of His return (i.e., the passing away of heaven and earth).”5[51] But this does not solve the exegetical problem of changes in the law, i.e., abrogation of most Mosaic laws, beginning with the ceremonial laws. Bahnsen insisted that there was a discontinuity with respect to the Mosaic ceremonial law. “The distinction *must* be drawn between *ceremonial* and *moral* laws, and one must recognize that the former’s manner of *observation* is today altered.”[52] The Epistle to the Hebrews offers no alternative conclusion for an orthodox Christian commentator.

5. Abiding Validity

There had been major discontinuities in the Mosaic civil law before Christ’s advent. An important one was the succession of the high priest. Bahnsen says that succession was from father to son, citing Nehemiah 12:10–11.[53] It is an odd passage to cite: “And Jeshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim also begat Eliashib, and Eliashib begat Joiada, And Joiada begat Jonathan, and Jonathan begat Jaddua.” Also, the document is post-exilic. There is nothing in the Mosaic law that specifies that this office was hereditary. In fact, there is almost nothing in the Mosaic law regarding the duties of the high priest. Leviticus 21:10–15 is the main section, which establishes ritual boundaries around him. What the Mosaic law did specify was that at his death, every protected resident of a city of refuge could lawfully return home without threat from the blood avenger (Num. 35:25–28).[54] The death of

50. Bahnsen, *Theonomy*, pp. 79–80.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 311.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 397.
54. Gary North, *Sanctions and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Numbers*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1997] 2012), ch. 21.

the high priest meant liberation for the man convicted of accidental manslaughter.

In Paul's day, this office was held on a rotating basis. Speaking of Caiaphas, the gospel of John reads: "And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation" (John 11:51). His father-in-law, Annas, sometimes held the office (Acts 4:6). So, the likelihood that a high priest would die in office was remote. A very old man or very sick man would not be appointed. Thus, the law governing cities of refuge would have been undermined. Under gentile rulers, it is unlikely that the system survived the Israelites' return to the land.

Bahnsen's problem was always this: How can we account for any judicial discontinuity at all? He did not solve this problem over the next quarter century. He needed to provide a definition and explanation of his phrase, *abiding validity*, as in: "Every detail of God's law has abiding validity from the time of Christ's advent to the time of His return (i.e., the passing away of heaven and earth)."[55] This was the title of Chapter 2: "The Abiding Validity if the Law in Exhaustive Detail." Yet he never defined the phrase, either logically or exegetically. His definition and explanation needed to be consistent with the thesis of jot-and-tittle continuity that he presented in Chapter 2. This was the most important chapter he ever wrote. It was the fulcrum of his life's work, including his enormous output of personal letters written in defense of theonomy. If "abiding" means "to remain constant over time, including today," then what does "validity" mean? *This is the word that he never defined*. He spent all of his effort in defending "abiding," and virtually none on "validity." I ask: In what way is everything that has abided—which he says is everything—also valid? What, in fact, has abided? Many things have not abided, such as the details of the ceremonial law. Then in what way is some aspect of the annulled ceremonial law still valid? This is the central issue of his hermeneutical system, yet he never addressed it directly.

I must admit that about half the time, I do not understand what James Jordan is writing about, and most of what I do understand I forget within an hour. I have always had the same problem with the writings of Geerhardus Vos. Vos and Jordan are involved in an academically arcane quest to discover in obscure biblical texts, and texts that the rest of us really did not imagine were all that obscure, the continuity of non-obvious authoritative meaning, including the

55. Bahnsen, *Theonomy*, p. 311.

meaning of symbols. Bahnsen rarely quoted Vos and was hostile to what Jordan calls "interpretative maximalism," yet what biblical theology is really all about is a search for continuity in the face of what appears to be textual discontinuity. In the negative aspect of their apologetic task, biblical theologians counter humanistic higher critics of the Bible, who substitute a theory of late-date scribal forgeries for a theory of divine inspiration.[56]

Jesus said that something remained constant (Matt. 5:17–19). What, exactly, did He have in mind? Bahnsen never made this clear. Some Mosaic laws were annulled long before Jesus Christ's advent. Which ones? Bahnsen did not mention these. Some laws were annulled by Jesus' teaching. Which ones? (One of them was the law of divorce by writ and remarriage.) Bahnsen did not mention these. After Christ's resurrection, other laws were changed. Which laws? Ceremonial laws, Bahnsen admitted. I would add land laws and seed laws. Then how can judicial continuity be true, from Moses through the prophets to the crucifixion, and from the resurrection to today? For all of its detail and logic, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* does not deal explicitly with this crucial hermeneutical problem by discussing the discontinuities in terms of some underlying judicial continuity. Was there some other form of continuity? If so, does this imply that the jots and tittles have not been constant judicially, but only symbolically or in some other way? Bahnsen argued for jot-and-tittle judicial continuity, yet he also admitted ceremonial discontinuity. He never reconciled the two positions, either logically or exegetically. Yet this is *the* hermeneutical problem for Bahnsen's thesis, as well as for every system of Christian ethics that begins with Matthew 5, as all of them should.

He needed to explain this phrase: *in passing*. It appeared in the context of his discussion of the issue of divorce and remarriage, which he discussed only in terms of divorce. Bahnsen wrote: "While Jesus stressed the hallowed nature of the marriage covenant, the scribes were more interested in the 'bill of divorcement' (which the Mosaic law mentioned only *in passing*) and the *exception* to God's creation ordinance."[57] Here is the hermeneutical problem: there is no room for "in passing" in Bahnsen's apologetic in Chapter 2, i.e., no change of either a jot or a tittle. He also needed to explain a Mosaic law that was an exception to God's creation ordinance: divorce by writ. How

56. North, *Boundaries and Dominion*, Appendix H.

57. Bahnsen, *Theonomy*, pp. 100–1.

is such an intrusion ethically possible? What principle of interpretation permits such an intrusion? Is it consistent with the principle of interpretation governing Chapter 2?

6. The Crucifixion and Judicial Fulfillment

The theological solution to the exegetical dilemma of Matthew 5:17–19 is found in verse 18: the second use of "until." Jesus' words announced the imminence of His personal fulfillment of the Mosaic law, and therefore its complete, unreserved annulment at the moment of its fulfillment: His death. Jesus was not looking to the passing of heaven and earth as the temporal boundary of the Mosaic law, i.e., the temporal application of "until." He was instead looking to His own death, which would be the temporal limit of His subjection to the Mosaic law and its ultimate sanction, death. The continuity of no jot or tittle was guaranteed after this perfect fulfillment.

After His resurrection, lots of jots and tittles of the Mosaic law remained in the grave, judicially speaking. From the wrapping of His body in swaddling clothes until the wrapping of His body in a death shawl, Jesus kept the Mosaic law perfectly. But He also taught against it as a permanently binding principle, i.e., binding on His followers beyond His resurrection. Like the element of death that Jesus' body had been subjected to, so were what Paul called "the weak and beggarly elements" of the Mosaic law (Gal. 4:9).

Bahnsen was aware of this approach to solving the problem of judicial discontinuity, which is ultimately the discontinuity of the two covenants. He resorted to grammar to counter this argument. He said that the word "until" applies in the second phrase to the Greek word for "all": *panta*. It is neuter; *Nomos* (law) is masculine. He said that "all" does not refer to the law.[58] Worse; he did not offer any suggestion as to what *panta* referred, if not the law. On this thin strand of reasoning, he rested his entire case for theonomy.

He rejected the suggestion of W. D. Davies—which is my view—that "until all be fulfilled" refers to Jesus' death on the cross. Bahnsen rejected several other similar suggestions, all referring to Jesus' work on earth. He dismissed them all with these words: "Nothing in the context of Matthew 5:18 warrants the introduction of speculative meaning; . . ."[59] This is a debater's tactic when the debater runs into trouble. Of course the theological dilemma does not have its origin

58. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
59. *Idem.*

in the text of Matthew 5:18. It has its origin in case after case in which Jesus announced a change in the Mosaic law. It is found in Paul's phrase, "weak and beggarly elements."

Bahnsen dismissed the explanation of "until" as applying to Jesus' ministry with a favorite pejorative word of a theologian who faces an interpretation that he rejects: "eisegesis" (to read into). "All these variations only demonstrate the inevitable results of *eisegesis*—or the exegesis of one's *theological scheme* in the name of exegeting a biblical *text*. . . ."[60] Problem: when two texts in the same document say completely different things, we have only two conclusions available: (1) the document in which the texts appear is inconsistent, or (2) there is a broader explanation that reconciles the two texts. This *reconciliation* is called, in Christian circles, *a theological scheme*. In short, theological schemes are inescapable concepts. It is never a question of "theological schemes vs. no theological schemes." It is always a question of *which* theological scheme to adopt.

Chapter 2 of *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* is probably the most thoroughgoing presentation of covenantal judicial continuity in the history of the church. But its logic does not offer any way to explain the obvious discontinuity between the Mosaic Covenant, which was part of the Old Covenant, and the New Covenant. The jots and tittles of most of the Mosaic law-order are gone for good. The church has always insisted on this. The texts of the New Testament also insist on this. Bahnsen's explanation of Matthew 5:17–19 is incomplete. His discussions of judicial discontinuities between the covenants, whether in *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* or in subsequent works, were not reconciled with his apologetic/hermeneutic of jot-and-tittle continuity in Chapter 2. He insisted that Jesus taught that this continuity would last until judgment day. But it did not last through the Gospel of Matthew. "They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19:7–9).

I realize that this is a very brief response to Bahnsen's long defense of theonomy. But it is a response based on an unresolved dilemma within *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*: the book's admitted exceptions

60. *Idem*.

to what can be called jot-and-tittle continuity. These discontinuities never received a sufficient hermeneutical explanation in terms of judicial continuity, which is verbally absolute in Matthew 5:19. "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." There is a missing piece in Bahnsen's hermeneutic. This missing piece is *an explanation of the temporal limit on the Mosaic law*, a limit based on the second application of "until," not the first. When Jesus fulfilled the entire Mosaic law by going to the cross as an innocent man, and therefore as an acceptable sacrifice to God, He buried the Mosaic law-order forever. What was resurrected with Him was the New Covenant's law-order. Unlike the Old Covenant, this one is written in the heart of every Christian (Heb. 8:6–10): *conscience*. This law-order, like the Old Covenant's law-order, is a tool of dominion.

Among the weak and beggarly elements of the now-interred Mosaic law are the laws governing divorce and remarriage through unilateral writ. Jesus was clear about the hardness of the hearts of Israelite husbands. His annulment of the law of divorce by writ was an implication of the new hearts of the redeemed, male and female. When Jesus extended to wives the right of divorce by writ, He removed the original justification of these writs: the hardness of men's hearts—not, by the way, women's hearts. He gave to women the legal authority that Joseph had possessed over Mary: the right, in justice, to put her away privately for her presumed uncleanness, but without appealing to a civil or ecclesiastical court. This would have been an act of mercy on Joseph's part, had the Holy Ghost not been the cause of her pregnancy. But, to make sure that future acts of similar mercy are truly acts of mercy rather than acts of spite, or worse, acts of concealed lust for a future replacement spouse, Jesus also imposed a new restriction: the prohibition against any future marriage by the writer of the writ.

There is no example in the New Testament that is stronger in contrasting the New Testament's version of theonomy with the Mosaic law. Jesus made it clear in Mark 10:2–12 that Deuteronomy 24:1–4 was an intrusion in the development of theonomy. It represented neither the pre-Mosaic legal standard, which was morally higher, nor the New Testament standard, which is morally higher. This statute was a judicial discontinuity that had been based on a moral flaw among

Israelite husbands. Therefore, a biblically sound hermeneutic for theonomy must recognize the existence of at least one Mosaic law as a judicial intrusion. This hermeneutic must be formulated in such a way that this specific intrusion is dealt with consistently by the general principle of judicial interpretation. This means, to put it starkly, that whatever Jesus meant by the unchanging *validity* of every jot and tittle of the Mosaic law (Matt. 5:18), this statute is no longer to be enforced. This is a hermeneutical challenge to every school of biblical interpretation that affirms the infallibility of Scripture.

H. Monogamy and Sanctions Against Remarriage

We now return to the issue of polygamy in the New Covenant.[61] Jesus established a principle of biblical justice in the area of divorce and remarriage: *gender equality before the law*. This principle also governed the Mosaic law in most cases. "One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you" (Ex. 12:49).[62] An exception was the law of unilateral divorce. Only husbands had possessed this right. What had been authorized solely to husbands by Moses under the Old Covenant has been extended to wives by Jesus under the New Covenant.

By not announcing the annulment of divorce by execution for adultery, Jesus hermeneutically implied the continuing authority of the Mosaic civil sanction: the legal status of adultery for any subsequent marriage by a spouse who initiates a no-trial divorce. Neither a husband nor a wife who initiates a no-trial divorce is ever allowed to remarry. Jesus made this clear. "And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery" (Mark 10:10–12).

Under the Mosaic law, gender inequality was basic to the law of divorce and remarriage. Not so in the New Covenant. If this argument is accurate, then a conclusion necessarily follows: *polygamy is illegal*. The husband in the Old Covenant could have multiple wives. The Mosaic law governing the inheritance left by a deceased polygamous father (Deut. 21:15–17) appears immediately following the law governing the divorce of a captive wife (Deut. 21:10–14). A polygamous man could divorce one wife, yet still retain the benefits of an existing marriage.

61. Chapter 3.

62. North, *Authority and Dominion*, Part 1, *Representation and Dominion* (1985), ch. 14.

When Jesus announced the same negative sanction—no remarriage—for those who initiate a no-trial divorce, He established *judicial equality for husbands and wives*. In order for judicial inequality not to resurface in the biblical law of divorce and remarriage, *neither the husband nor the wife should suffer less from the sanction*. If a husband has two or more wives, and he divorces one of them, he has a major advantage over a wife who initiates a no-trial divorce, but who can never lawfully remarry. There are only two ways to establish judicial equality under such marital conditions: either criminalize polygamy or legalize polyandry.

There have been very few societies in history that have legalized polyandry. A wife with multiple husbands creates confusion: confusion regarding which children belong to which man, and confusion regarding which husband she must obey. A wife is required by God to serve her husband as his subordinate. This removes polyandry as a legal option. But if polyandry is not an option, then neither is polygamy. To argue otherwise is to argue for sexual inequality with respect to the prohibition against remarriage by the initiators of no-trial divorce.

Conclusion

I have come to the conclusion that *no-trial divorce* was authorized by Jesus, though only in the legal context of *deadly fault remarriage*. The reason why I regard the person who initiates a no-trial divorce as being prohibited from remarrying is because I uphold the principle of victim's rights. If innocent spouses are not to be penalized for the sins of their marriage partners, then there must be some way for the innocent partner to gain a lawful divorce apart from any negative legal sanctions. There are three ways: divorce by execution, divorce for the partner's fornication, and divorce because the other partner has deserted. As I wrote earlier, divorce by desertion is in fact a no-trial unilateral divorce. The innocent spouse is allowed to remarry, but the initiator is not.

Jesus explicitly prohibited remarriage for a spouse who initiates a divorce. So, He had to have two kinds of divorce in mind: trial and no-trial. This difference is marked by the word, "except." "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

God authorized no-trial divorce for men in Deuteronomy 24:1. He

did this because of the hardness of the Israelite males' hearts. What Jesus did was to extend this right of no-trial divorce to wives. He also took away the right of remarriage from anyone who initiates and gains a no-trial divorce.

Jesus annulled the Mosaic laws of divorce and remarriage. He equalized the law of no-trial divorce, husband vs. wife. Either party, not just the husband, now has the legal right to initiate a no-trial divorce. No court can lawfully overrule this decision.

Jesus also tightened the law of remarriage by prohibiting the remarriage of the partner who initiates and gains a no-trial divorce. Jesus identified such remarriage as adulterous. He did not annul the Mosaic law of adultery, which included the death penalty, imposed at the discretion of the victimized spouse.

This *gender equalization* of both the authorization of no-trial divorce and the penalty against remarriage implies that *polygamy is prohibited* in the New Testament era. A divorcing husband who has multiple wives will not suffer so much as a divorcing wife will suffer from the prohibition against remarriage. If the threat of this negative sanction is to be equal, sexually speaking, then the legal condition must be equal. This legal condition is monogamy.

Those Christians who proclaim "no divorce allowed" necessarily deny the principle of victim's rights. The victimized ex-spouse is thereby penalized by the sinner. The victim is nevertheless required to live with the sinner.

Those who proclaim "divorce, but no remarriage" also necessarily deny the principle of victim's rights. The victimized spouse is thereby penalized by the sinner. The victim is not allowed to remarry.

The New Testament allows no-trial divorce, but only under the assumption of the civil government's enforcement of deadly fault remarriage for the divorce's initiator. These closely related civil laws are grounded on the principle of victim's rights.

This analysis of no-trial divorce does not annul the Mosaic principle of divorce by execution. It also does not abandon the theonomic principle that the judicial content of Mosaic laws and sanctions still prevails under the New Covenant unless the New Testament has annulled or revised them, either explicitly or by implication. When Jesus defined as adulterous any remarriage by the initiator of a no-trial divorce, He identified such remarriage as a capital crime. This places both remarriage partners at the mercy of the divorced spouse: victim's rights.

In the case of divorce and remarriage, both the annulment and the revision of the Mosaic law governing no-trial divorce are explicit in the New Testament. In the case of the ban on polygamy, the annulment of the Mosaic law is implicit: an application of the New Testament's law prohibiting the remarriage of a divorce-initiating spouse after a no-trial divorce. *The New Testament's legal principle of gender equality before the law makes polygamy illegal.* This principle applies to the civil law governing divorce as well as ecclesiastical law.

If I am incorrect in my reasoning in this essay, then it is imperative for Christian theologians to present a New Testament case for the church's prohibition of polygamy for men who are not church officers. It is also imperative that they find justification for civil laws against polygamy. An explicit prohibition appears nowhere in the New Testament, except for church officers—a fact that theologians and ethicists prefer to ignore.

Did Jesus annul a Mosaic law? Yes. On whose authority? His own, as high priest. With a change in the priesthood comes a change in God's law (Heb. 7:12). This did not satisfy the Jews. They had Him crucified by the Romans. By doing this, they brought an end to the Old Covenant order. This was the fulfillment of the Mosaic law, the *definitive* passing away of heaven and earth: the Old Covenant. His resurrection confirmed this passing away. So did His ascension, when, as high priest, He passed into the heavens (Heb. 4:14). The *progressive* passing away of heaven and earth took place in the era of the apostles: the last days (Acts 2:16–20). The *final* passing away of heaven and earth took place at the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70: the days of vengeance (Luke 21:20–28).[63] The unitary, integrated system of jots and tittles that constituted the Mosaic law passed away. The priestly Mosaic laws, the tribal land laws of inheritance, and the tribal seed laws of inheritance ended, which included the bill of divorcement.

63. Chilton, *Days of Vengeance*.

APPENDIX B

ECONOMIC VALUE AND IMPUTATION

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

GENESIS 1:31

A. Value and Price

An enduring question of economic theory is this: "How is price related to value?" Prices are objective: so much of this buys so much of that. But is economic value also objective? Competing answers to this question have divided economists from the beginning of the discipline. This is why the question is enduring. Humanistic economists cannot answer it. This is because the question of *value and price* is an application of a larger philosophical question, which is also unanswerable by humanism: the *subject-object relationship*.

To clarify the nature of the problem of value theory in economics, I employ an analogy based on another application of value theory. A wife asks: "Do you love me?" Her husband dutifully answers: "Of course I do." She presses the issue: "How much do you love me?" He answers: "A lot." She continues: "Do you love me more than you used to love your ex-girlfriend?" He replies: "Yes, I do." So far, we are still in the realm of subjective value.

She presses the issue. "You used to be wild about her. I remember. You don't act very wild about me. Do you love me more now than you loved her back then?" This raises the question of the permanence of value scales over time. The problem is, these scales of value change. Also, we forget what they were, and how intensely they registered with us. A truth-telling husband may reply: "I just don't remember."

Or he may say, "I love you more now than I loved her back then," mentally defining "love" to make the statement true. But how can he be sure what he felt back then? His memory has faded, along with his passion. This is the philosophical problem of subjective valuation through time. No one possesses a permanent subjective value scale that measures changes in one's temporal subjective value scale—no one except Jesus Christ. As we shall see, His value scale is what makes the epistemological difference in the theory of economic value.

Next, she moves to objective value. "Exactly how much more do you love me than you used to love her?" Now he faces a dilemma, both personal and epistemological. She has moved from a consideration of his subjective scale of values to an objective measure of subjective value. Here is his epistemological dilemma: *there is no objective measure of subjective value*. A subjective value scale is *ordinal*—first, second, third—rather than *cardinal*, i.e., "exactly this much more." Subjective values are ranked, not measured.[1]

A wise husband with a knowledge of the Bible might try to end the discussion by saying, "I love you more than rubies." Solomon said something like this. "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies" (Prov. 31:10). But even Solomon did not say exactly how much above rubies her price is.

Solomon was very wise.

Economists are not equally wise. They have embroiled their discipline with epistemological questions of objective vs. subjective value. They have raised questions that they cannot answer.

B. Economic Value Theory in Humanistic Economics

Ever since the subjectivist epistemological revolution of economics in the early 1870s, economists have developed a widely shared explanation for how economic value changes. This explanation rests on men's subjective imputation of economic value. The modern economist's approach to the problem of economic value begins with a presupposition based on introspection: "Every rational person has an individual scale of values by which he evaluates his specific, constantly changing circumstances." This scale is hierarchical: first, second, third, etc. It is also subject to change. This hierarchical value scale enables a man

1. Murray N. Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State: A Treatise on Economic Principles*, 2nd ed. (Auburn, Alabama: Mises Institute, [1962] 2009), ch. 1:5:A.

to evaluate—impute value to—scarce resources[2] at any point in time. He compares the usefulness of various scarce resources in terms of his personal scale of values. Then he decides to buy, keep, or sell specific assets. He seeks to improve his circumstances by offering to exchange assets that he owns for assets that he desires to rent, own, or re-sell. The competing bids of owners and would-be owners establish objective prices in the market place. This bidding process, says the modern economist, is how men's subjective values become objective prices.

What distinguishes modern economic theory (post-1870) from pre-modern economic theory is the modern economist's formal denial of the existence of objective value. This formal assertion of pure subjectivism is an example of an entire profession's self-delusion. One or another theory of objective value is sneaked into economics through an epistemological back door.

One example of the reappearance of objective value theory is the supposedly scientific justification for the establishment of any social policy through civil government. Policy-makers must decide on the appropriateness of a specific policy on the basis of a law's supposed benefits and costs to certain groups within society. Some members of some groups will win; others will lose. Economists insist that they can help policy-makers make this decision by providing a scientific cost-benefit analysis. This assertion is logically inconsistent with subjectivism's epistemology. If economic value is exclusively subjective, then there is no way to calculate group benefits and costs. There is no way, in other words, to make interpersonal comparisons of subjective utility.[3] The validity of a phrase such as Jeremy Bentham's "greatest good for the greatest number" rests on at least three assumptions: (1) the existence of aggregate objective value; (2) the policy-maker's ability to discover this aggregate objective value; and (3) the policy-maker's ability to design legislative programs that will maximize aggregate objective value. Economists formally begin with a theory of exclusively subjective individual valuation, but whenever they seek to assess the comparative outcomes of one social policy vs. another, they necessarily must adopt an informal theory of aggregate objective valuation.[4] Only rarely are they even aware of this subtle reintroduc-

2. A scarce resource is defined as follows: at zero price, there is greater demand for it than supply.

3. Lionel Robbins, *An Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science*, rev. ed. (London: Macmillan, 1935), ch. 6.

4. Gary North, Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1982] 012) ch. 5; North, *Authority and Dominion: An*

tion of objective value theory. They do not offer any epistemological justification for this shift. In short, economists initially assume that they can do what their epistemology says cannot be done, and then they refuse to admit either to themselves or to other policy-makers what they have done.

Another example of objective value theory in operation is the construction of a price index. A price index is believed to measure price changes over time. The index aggregates specific price changes. This enables the economist to observe rates of change in what he calls "the price level." This is a convenient fiction in the theoretical world of subjectivist epistemology. An engineer can measure the water level in a bathtub, but a commodity's price is not physical, unlike a drop of water. There is no bathtub of commodity prices. A price index is a subjective mental construct that is believed by policy-makers and most economists to convey objectively useful information about changes in specific objective prices. The price index is based on *statistical samples* of *reported prices* of supposedly *representative* goods and services. This statistical index is a substitute for all prices, the number of which approaches infinity as a limit.

A price index is constructed on the basis of an economist's subjective weighing of the subjective evaluations (scientifically unknowable) by "customers in general" (scientifically unknowable) of the prices of a sample group of commodities and services (a "basket of goods"). Even the term "weighing" is artificial: we do not literally weigh value. To assign a "weight" to a commodity is a subjective assessment of comparative subjective importance for customers. I ask: Which specific groups of customers are most representative of all customers? Are these groups of customers representative permanently? Do their tastes change over time? Does any unchanging "basket of goods" retain the same importance to these representative customers if their tastes change over time? If it doesn't retain the same importance, then how can an earlier basket of goods be compared with a later basket? None of these questions can be answered scientifically apart from the presupposition of measurable value. But there is no objective measure of subjective value, according to modern economic theory.

Economic Commentary on Exodus (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), Part 3, *Tools of Dominion* (1990), Appendix M. This appendix became *The Coase Theorem: A Study in Epistemology* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1992). Coase never responded. He died in 2013 at the age of 102.

Economists rarely discuss these obvious discrepancies from the profession's nearly universal assumption of subjective value theory.[5] When they do offer a theory that is said to overcome the subjective-objective dualism of economic value theory, the vast majority of their colleagues ignore them. Those few economists who do not ignore them probably disagree with them. Humanistic economists are as trapped by the subject-object dualism of all humanist thought as are the members of every other academic discipline.

C. Economic Value Theory in Christian Economics

Christian economics must view the individual's subjective imputation of economic value as analogical to God's imputation of value. The best example in the Bible of this process of divine imputation is Genesis 1, where God announces at the end of each day that His work is good. He announces subjectively that which is objectively true. There is perfect correspondence between subjective value and objective value in the correspondence between God's objective work and His subjective imputation. *In the triune God of the Bible is the reconciliation of the subject-object dualism*. What God does originally and creatively, man does analogically and re-creatively.[6] Each individual does this either as a covenant-keeper or a covenant-breaker.

God does not choose between this or that scarce economic resource. Nothing is scarce for God. But God does establish standards of economic value for decision-makers. God tells men what is valuable and what is not. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

Because of sin, covenant-breakers do not adopt God's mandated standard of economic value as their own. They impute high value to that which is not highly valuable, and vice versa. Men in their rebellion against God substitute covenant-breaking individual subjective scales of economic value for the unitary, objective scale of economic value that God has established for mankind corporately and also for individuals. Covenant-breaking men reject God's values. God warns them: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD" (Isa. 55:8). The proper response is King David's: "Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on

5. I say "nearly universal" because Marxist economists still officially adhere to objective value theory, i.e., Marx's labor theory of value.

6. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, ch. 5.

thee do I wait all the day" (Ps. 25:4–5). "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments" (Ps. 119:59–60).

Covenant-breakers seek to *legislate objective reality* on the basis of their own authority by means of their subjective imputations of subjective value. Every covenant-breaker is a self-proclaimed autonomous evaluator who seeks to impose his own subjective values. Among covenant-breakers, there is no common scale of economic value, either subjective or objective, except for the one that they have stolen from God, in whose image they are made, and from whose constant testimony against them they cannot escape. Men's presumed autonomy leads to theories of ethical and aesthetic relativism. It also leads to conflicts over values, which include economic value.

There is no unitary humanistic scale of economic value that can serve as either the basis of, or a measure of, objective economic value. God alone provides the definitive scale of objective economic value that can serve men as a consistent epistemological and ethical basis of their subjective economic valuations. *It is God, and only God, who establishes objective economic value.* He is the absolutely sovereign Creator and Sustainer of the world. He is therefore the absolutely sovereign subjective Imputer of economic value. In the triune God of the Bible alone is a consistent solution to humanism's subject-object dualism, and therefore also the dualism of subjective and objective economic value.

Conclusion

Value theory is both subjective and objective. Economists prior to 1870 emphasized objective value. Economists after 1870 (Marxists excepted) have emphasized subjective value. But economists sneak an element of objective value back into their theories.[7] On the one hand, they deny that it is possible for an economist or anyone else to make interpersonal comparisons of subjective utility. On the other hand, every economist must assume that such comparisons are valid in order to construct price indexes or to make policy recommendations. There is no way logically for economists to explain objective value in terms of subjective value, or vice versa; nevertheless, they speak, write, and act as though their theory of autonomous acting man did allow this, even though in theory, they admit that it doesn't.

7. An exception was Israel Kirzner, who retained his commitment to pure subjectivism. I recall no case where he made a policy recommendation.

Christian economics offers a solution to the subject-object antinomy of all humanistic economics: God's subjective imputation of value to His objectively valuable creation. Man is made in God's image. Man therefore possesses the ability and the responsibility to impute economic value to aspects of God's creation. Each imputation will not match God's, but the standard is Jesus Christ's imputation in His nature as perfect humanity. "But we have the mind of Christ" (I Cor. 2:16b). Each covenant-keeper's progressive sanctification leads him closer to this performance standard.

APPENDIX C

ADAM SMITH'S THEORY OF ECONOMIC CAUSATION

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

I TIMOTHY 6:7–11

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

I TIMOTHY 6:17–19

A. The God of Moralism

In his first published book, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), Adam Smith was careful not to deny either the benefits or the impulse of charitable giving. He devoted the final chapter of the book to a consideration "of universal Benevolence." But his analysis of charity rested entirely on his unitarian theology, which is no longer in favor among economists. I call it unitarian because his god was not the God of redemption through faith in Christ. His god was a god of moralism.

The eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment was developed by members of Scotland's Presbyterian Church, but they were liberals, rightfully called latitudinarians.[1] Two of the movement's founders were sons of Presbyterian ministers: Gershom Carmichael (1672–1729) and Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746), the two predecessors of Adam Smith as professors of moral philosophy at Glasgow University. Carmichael's father had been exiled from Scotland for heresy.[2] Another founder of the Scottish Enlightenment was the philosopher, David Hume. He was a philosophical skeptic, but he did maintain membership in the church, although he came close to being excommunicated.[3]

When Smith was awarded the chair in moral philosophy at Glasgow in 1752, he was required to affirm his commitment to the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647), the most detailed and rigorous Calvinistic confession in history. Yet there is no trace of Calvin's theology in anything that Smith wrote. Smith's concept of God was indistinguishable from unitarianism's doctrine of god: a god who does not bring negative sanctions in history, a god of universal benevolence. He called on all men to believe in this god. In 1759, he wrote,

> This universal benevolence, how noble and generous soever, can be the source of no solid happiness to any man who is not thoroughly convinced that all the inhabitants of the universe, the meanest as well as the greatest, are under the immediate care and protection of that great, benevolent, and all-wise Being, who directs all the movements of nature; and who is determined, by his own unalterable perfections, to maintain in it, at all times, the greatest possible quantity of happiness. To this universal benevolence, on the contrary, the very suspicion of a fatherless world, must be the most melancholy of all reflections; from the thought that all the unknown regions of infinite and incomprehensible space may be filled with nothing but endless misery and wretchedness. All the splendour of the highest prosperity can never enlighten the gloom with which so dreadful an idea must necessarily over-shadow the imagination; nor, in a wise and virtuous man, can all the sorrow of the most afflicting adversity ever dry up the joy which necessarily springs from the habitual and thorough conviction of the truth of the contrary system.[4]

The existence of such a god is basic to the preservation of benevolence among men. Smith insisted that it must not be left to men

1. Murray N. Rothbard, *Economic Thought Before Adam Smith: An Austrian Perspective on the History of Economic Thought*, 2 vols. (Brookfield, Vermont: Edward Elgar, 1995), I, pp. 423–25, 440.

2. *Ibid.*, I, p. 417.

3. *Ibid.*, I, p. 425.

4. *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, VI:III:III.

to extend systematic benevolence on their own authority. God must preserve benevolence among fallen men, even as Newton had hypothesized God's direct intervention in maintaining the orbits of the planets in order to preserve their order—a suggestion that Leibniz challenged in private correspondence during Newton's lifetime, and which Newton's followers abandoned entirely after his death in 1727. Smith ended the book with a warning against trusting in the benevolence of men.

> The administration of the great system of the universe, however, the care of the universal happiness of all rational and sensible beings, is the business of God and not of man. To man is allotted a much humbler department, but one much more suitable to the weakness of his powers, and to the narrowness of his comprehension; the care of his own happiness, of that of his family, his friends, his country: that he is occupied in contemplating the more sublime, can never be an excuse for his neglecting the more humble department; and he must not expose himself to the charge which Avidius Cassius is said to have brought, perhaps unjustly, against Marcus Antoninus; that while he employed himself in philosophical speculations, and contemplated the prosperity of the universe, he neglected that of the Roman empire. The most sublime speculation of the contemplative philosopher can scarce compensate the neglect of the smallest active duty.[5]

Smith knew, just as Paul had known, that men's decisions are not usually governed by the impulse of charity. This fact of economic life had led social theorists for millennia to the same conclusion: a society that relies on that which is abnormal to govern its day-to-day operations is a society that will not survive with its institutions intact. No society has ever survived whose institutions have rested on the assumption of the widespread impulse of charity. Monasteries have come the closest to this ideal, but they always operate in terms of tight hierarchical systems of control over their members. St. Benedict is famous for his *Rule* (*c*. 530), not for his order's charity. Of the *Rule*'s 73 chapters, most deal with discipline, and the chapter that deals with the distribution of goods (34) is careful to speak of the required sanctions.

> *Whether All Should Receive in Equal Measure What Is Necessary*
>
> It is written, "Distribution was made to everyone according as he had need" (Acts 4:35). We do not say by this that respect should be had for persons (God forbid), but regard for infirmities. Let him who hath need of less thank God and not give way to sadness, but let him who hath need

5. Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, VI:III:III.

> of more, humble himself for his infirmity, and not be elated for the indulgence shown him; and thus all the members will be at peace.
>
> Above all, let not the evil of murmuring appear in the least word or sign for any reason whatever. If anyone be found guilty herein, let him be placed under very severe discipline.[6]

When departing from the economic motivation of *personal self-interest* and its inescapable result, *economic inequality*, he who proposes an alternative social arrangement had better be ready to accept the fact that the organization's officials must impose "very severe discipline."

Theologically speaking, the supreme act of charity in history was Jesus Christ's personal sacrifice of Himself on behalf of the world, which hated Him or else knew nothing about Him. Had He not been willing to do this, then on the day of Adam's rebellion, mankind would have perished.[7] He also died on behalf of His covenant people. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). This was surely an abnormal act of self-sacrifice, but it remains the supreme normative model for His followers. When that which is personally normative is also socially abnormal, then it is an unreliable standard of government for the masses of humanity.

Smith believed that benevolence in human affairs is dependent generally on God, not men. In the next phase of his intellectual career, he abandoned any reliance on benevolence at all, for deism's god disappeared from Smith's analysis. He offered a new view of social order, one that need not rely on a god or individual benevolence in order to produce an inherently benevolent society. In short, *out of selfishness, benevolence*.

B. Smith's Conceptual Revolution

In *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Smith reconstructed economic theory by forthrightly admitting what men have known from the beginning, namely, that individual self-interest is a far more widely distributed motivation than individual self-sacrifice, at least outside the immediate family unit and associations necessarily based on self-sacrifice on behalf of the larger entity, such as the church and the military. Smith's main contribution to economic theory was his cogent and consistent

6. *The Holy Rule of St. Benedict*, trans. Rev. Boniface Verhuysen, OSB (Achison, Kansas: St. Benedict's Abbey, 1949), ch. 34.

7. Gary North, *Dominion and Common Grace: The Biblical Basis of Progress* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987), ch. 1.

explanation of the national economy in terms of voluntary acts of individual exchange. He explained the unplanned but orderly macro economy as a product of individually planned micro economies: individuals, families, and firms. In short, *out of many, one*.

Smith's primary goal for his book was to explain the corporate wealth of nations and why this wealth varied, nation to nation. He offered an explanation based on methodological individualism. He taught that individual self-interest in a myriad of voluntary transactions is the source of the growing corporate wealth of nations. The wealth of nations is the undesigned outcome of the wealth of individuals.

Smith's methodological individualism differs fundamentally from the Bible's principle of methodological covenantalism. The Mosaic law presents its various discussions of the wealth of individuals in terms of the wealth of the nation or the covenanted corporate group to which the individuals in question belong. The economic sanctions of wealth and poverty are predictable in terms of a group's adherence to the specifics of biblical law, but not in terms of personal obedience. Nevertheless, Paul teaches that the work of the law is written on all men's hearts (Rom. 2:15).[8] In this sense, there is individualism. But it is not an autonomous form of individualism that is devoid of judicial, covenantal links to other men. The Bible does not teach that, on an individual basis, adherence to God's law predictably produces wealth. It does teach that when large numbers of people obey the work of the law in their hearts, their nation will prosper, which includes most residents. What Smith said is produced by the division of labor—greater wealth for men and nations—the Mosaic law said is true of the effects of covenant-keeping. Smith traced wealth to widespread economic exchange. The Mosaic law traced it to widespread individual obedience to God's law.

Smith's concern with the wealth of nations remains the central issue of most debates over economic policy today. The attainment of sustained economic growth and the avoidance of short-term economic contractions ("recessions") are the central economic issues in modern politics. These issues are also central to what we might call economic apologetics. In this sense, politicians and economists continue the inquiry begun by Moses in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 into the causes of corporate blessings and cursings. They merely

8. Gary North, *Cooperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 4.

secularize the terms.[9] But, from the point of view of economic theory, Smith's definition of economics as the science of national wealth no longer serves as the foundation of economic analysis. The history of economic thought since Smith has been a series of alternative definitions of the scope and method of economic science: social welfare,[10] individual wealth maximization (avarice),[11] exchange,[12] money and economic measurement,[13] resource allocation,[14] and purposeful individual action[15]—all in a world of scarcity.

In Smith's analysis, poor people whose economic output is not in demand by customers at prevailing prices are not direct participants in the free market's self-interested system of voluntary exchange. But, as national wealth increases, it is plausible to assume that the poor will benefit, too. There will be more charity, more instruments of healing, and additional charitable institutions to deal with the afflictions of the poor. The danger in making this assumption is that the pursuit of wealth may hinder men's sacrificial impulse. The desires unleashed by rising personal income may overwhelm the wealth owner's impulse to sacrifice, just as an addictive drug overwhelms the addict's priorities. To these negative results of the free market economy, Paul speaks clearly. The rich must be exhorted to act sacrificially. While it is formally true that the value of each additional unit of revenue will be used by its recipient to satisfy a desire that is lower on his scale of values, *this scale of values is not fixed through time*. It is likely to be affected by the increase in income. Tastes change as men grow richer. Self-sacrifice may be pushed further down on a person's scale of values. In terms of his earlier priorities, sacrificial giving may have been higher on his value scale, but wealth has changed his priorities. *Other things have not remained equal.*

Capitalism has opened up the possibility of attaining great wealth to more people than any other social system ever has. Capitalism's defenders have proclaimed a humanistic and nearly universal gospel of wealth, and in so doing, they have lowered a traditional psychological barrier against personal wealth-seeking. Paul's warning against the

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9. Robert H. Nelson, *Economics as Religion: from Samuelson to Chicago and Beyond* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

10. Israel M. Kirzner, *The Economic Point of View* (Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand, 1960), pp, 43–50.

11. *Ibid.*, ch. 3.

12. *Ibid.*, ch. 4.

13. *Ibid.*, ch. 5.

14. *Ibid.*, ch. 6.

15. *Ibid.*, ch. 7.

negative moral consequences of the personal quest for great wealth has been drowned out by Smith's vision of universal riches through the division of labor and the private ownership of the means of production. Capitalism has mass produced opportunities to get rich, making these opportunities available to hundreds of millions of people who would never have believed that such wealth was available to the common man. It has mass produced these dreams by lowering the barriers to dreaming: legal, psychological, moral, and geographical.

According to Smith, the primary impulse for service to people outside of the family is personal self-interest: the quest for income through trade. The pursuit of money is a universal motivation. Capitalism institutionalizes this universal motivation, and makes it service-oriented. Capitalism harnesses and re-channels what Paul identified as a morally dangerous impulse. *Capitalism generates positive temporal benefits by means of a negative spiritual impulse*. Capitalism has produced a transformation in moral theory and practice.

The most consistent development of Smith's analytical principle of individual self-interest is found in the writings of a novelist, Ayn Rand.[16] She wrote a non-fiction book, *The Virtue of Selfishness* (1976). One of her disciples is economist George Reisman. He referred to the benevolent nature of capitalism.[17] The results are benevolent even though the system rests on individual selfishness. Capitalism "promotes human life and well-being and does so for everyone."[18] In short, *out of evil, good*.

C. Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*

This implausible moral transformation was promoted by Bernard Mandeville in his anonymous 1705 poem, *The Grumbling Hive: or, Knaves Turn'd Honest*. Mandeville, an immigrant to England from Holland, offered an analogy of human society as a bee hive. The poem pointed out that personal motives and private actions that are socially condemned as selfish produce socially beneficial results. For instance, fickleness in dress and fashion creates jobs for those who satisfy ever-changing tastes. But for Adam Smith and all who have followed his lead, the crucial observation had to do with the cause of economic growth.

16. *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged* are her two major novels.

17. George Reisman, *Capitalism: A Treatise on Economics* (Ottawa, Illinois: Jameson Books, 1999), index: "Capitalism: benevolent nature of."

18. Reisman, "Some Fundamental Insights into the Benevolent Nature of Capitalism" (Oct. 25, 2002), published by the Ludwig von Mises institute.

> Thus Vice nursed Ingenuity,
> Which joined with Time, and Industry
> Had carried Life's Conveniencies,
> Its real Pleasures, Comforts, Ease,
> To such a Height, the very Poor
> Lived better than the Rich before[19]

The original poem attracted little attention. In 1714, Mandeville republished it anonymously, this time with extensive commentary. He called it *The Fable of the Bees*, which was subtitled, *Private Vices, Publick Benefits*. It sold well enough to go into a second printing that year. In the second printing, he added this subtitle: *Several Discourses, to demonstrate, that Human Frailties, . . . may be turned to the Advantage of the Civil Society, and made to supply the Place of Moral Virtues*. In 1723, there was another edition. Because of a highly controversial chapter added toward the end, "An Essay on Charity and Charity Schools," the book became notorious overnight. He opposed charity schools for the poor. The book became so notorious that some of the leading thinkers of the century wrote books against it, including Bishop Berkeley and Francis Hutcheson.

F. A. Hayek regarded this book as the turning point in the history of social theory because of its influence on David Hume, and, through Hume, on Scottish moral philosophy. He said the subtitle of the second 1714 edition is the key. "What I believe he wants to say by this is precisely what Josiah Tucker expressed more clearly 40 years later when he wrote that 'that *universal* mover in human nature, SELF-LOVE, may receive such direction in this case (as in all others) as to promote the public interest by those efforts it shall make towards pursuing its own'."[20]

There were editions in 1724 and 1725. In 1728, he added a second volume of commentary. Hayek noted: "By that time, however, he had become a bogey man, a name with which to frighten the godly and respectable, an author whom one might read in secret to enjoy a paradox, but whom everybody knew to be a moral monster by whose ideas one must not be infected. Yet almost everyone read him and few escaped

19. Lines 197–202.

20. He cited Tucker, *The Elements of Commerce and Theory of Taxes* (1755), in R. L. Schuyler (ed.), Josiah Tucker, *A Selection from his Economic and Political Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), p. 92. Hayek, "Lecture on a master mind," delivered to the British Academy (23 March 1966); reprinted in Hayek, *New Studies*, p. 259. The essay appears as "Dr. Bernard Mandeville." It is reprinted in *The Collected Works of F. A. Hayek*, 19 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), III, p. 90.

infection."[21] Hayek added in a footnote: "There is perhaps no other comparable work of which one can be equally confident that all contemporary writers in the field knew it, whether they explicitly refer to it or not." Yet today, Mandeville's two volumes are little known and read only by academic specialists.[22] Be thankful that you are not one of them.

Prior to Mandeville, selfishness had been seen as a vice. Virtue had been seen as obedience to righteous moral commands. This outlook was basic to classical political philosophy and also to the Renaissance, Machiavelli excepted. It was also basic to the outlook of early eighteenth-century republican political theory.[23] Mandeville rejected this outlook. He defined virtue as acts motivated apart from personal self-interest. This was a denial of the Bible's system of covenantal ethics, which proclaims that acting in conformity to God's law brings positive sanctions. Then, having defined virtue so rigorously, Mandeville denied that it could ever be found in human nature. All virtuous acts are in fact acts of disguised self-interest and even self-deception.[24] Hayek commented: "By treating as vicious everything done for selfish purposes, and admitting as virtuous only what was done in order to obey moral commands, he had little difficulty in showing that we owed most benefits of society to what on such a rigoristic standard must be called vicious. This was no new discovery but as old almost as any reflection on these problems. . . . Yet by making his starting-point the particular moral contrast between the selfishness of the motives and the benefits which the resulting actions conferred on others, Mandeville saddled himself with an incubus of which neither he nor his successors to the present day could ever quite free themselves."[25]

Hayek, as a defender of social evolutionism,[26] saw Mandeville's

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21. *Ibid.*, pp. 251–52; *Collected Works*, III, p. 82.

22. The two volumes, which Oxford University Press published in 1924, were reprinted in 1988 by the Liberty Fund, which publishes classics in conservative and libertarian social and economic theory.

23. Thomas A. Horne, *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville: Virtue and Commerce in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), pp. 5–6, 54–55, 96; E. J. Hundert, *The Enlightenment's Fable: Bernard Mandeville and the Discovery of Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 9–10.

24. F. B. Kaye, "Introduction," Bernard Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1924), I, pp. xlvi–lxiv.

25. Hayek, *New Studies*, pp. 252–53; *Collected Works*, III, p. 83.

26. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1982] 2012), Appendix B. See especially Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit: The Errors of Socialism* (1988), vol. III of *The Collected Works of F. A. Hayek* (Chicago University of Chicago Press). He attempted in this book to avoid using the word "social" (p. 109), but he could not avoid the concept.

main contribution as the precursor of his own theory of the spontaneous social order. Mandeville, like Hayek, was interested in why undesigned social institutions are able to channel private vices (e.g., producers' greed) into public benefits (e.g., consumers' goods). In the words of that other Scottish rationalist, Adam Ferguson, repeatedly quoted by Hayek, Mandeville discussed the results of human action but not of human design.[27] This was also the main focus of Hayek's intellectual career after the publication of his *Constitution of Liberty* (1960). This extended to his final book, *The Fatal Conceit*, which was published in 1988, when he was 89 years old. "What Mandeville was concerned with was that institutions which man had not deliberately made—though it is the task of the legislator to improve them—bring it about that the divergent interests of the individuals are reconciled."[28] The so-called harmony of interests is neither designed nor innate in society, Hayek argued. Rather, this harmony evolves under certain institutions, but not under others, i.e. socialism.

Hayek pointed out that the Scottish Enlightenment's social theorists were social Darwinists a century before Darwin. They explained the origin of social order (the one) as the result of unplanned interactions between undesigned, evolutionary social institutions and individual decision-making (the many). A century later, Darwin applied this same worldview to biological evolution: the process of an impersonal, undesigned natural selection of survivors who possess environment-favored but unplanned biological characteristics. We know that Darwin read Adam Smith, though apparently not *Wealth of Nations*.[29] The public scandal that Darwin created after 1859 was an extension of the original public scandal that Mandeville created in 1723. Both men offered explanations for perceived order without invoking the traditional theological argument from design.[30]

D. Smith Extended Mandeville's Insight

Smith's teacher Francis Hutcheson was repelled by the moral implications of Mandeville's poem and book. Hutcheson was a proponent of Shaftesbury's moralism.[31] Shaftesbury was Mandeville's primary

27. Hayek, *New Studies,* p. 264; *Collected Works*, III, p. 96. This is from Ferguson's book, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), p. 187.

28. Hayek, *New Studies,* p. 260; *Collected Works*, III, p. 91.

29. Hayek, *Fatal Conceit*, p. 24.

30. Hayek, *New Studies*, p. 265; *Collected Works*, III, p. 97.

31. Alasdair ManIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Natre Dame, Iniana: Notre Dame University Press, 1988), pp. 268–69.

target, as he said repeatedly. Hutcheson wanted a society based on morality. Mandeville said this is impossible. Any attempt to do this is destructive of wealth in large nations. Pride, the love of luxury, and spending make a nation great.[32] Hutcheson was appalled. So was Smith, who favored thrift and production. But this merely pushed the moral dilemma back one step. The person who is industrious in order to sell a luxury good has as his goal a sale. This requires a buyer. The motivation of the two participants is the same: individual self-interest. To make a purchase, the buyer must possess money or some other asset. So, from the point of view of the free market, the sovereign customer's desire for a luxury good at a competitive price is the reason for the producer's industriousness. Yes, Mandeville was a proto-Keynesian—a demand-side economist—as Rothbard points out,[33] and, far more important, as Keynes pointed out.[34] But this does not change the nature of his revolutionary insight: *the transformation of individual self-interest into public benefits*.

In his book, *The Virtue of Prosperity*, Dinesh D'Sousa commented on the debate between Mandeville and Smith, which I regard as a debate between demand-side economics (Mandeville) and supply-side economics (Smith).

> Adam Smith, for example, roundly denounced Mandeville's views as "wholly pernicious." Smith was no fan of sloth and extravagance, as Mandeville was. At the same time he agreed with Mandeville that the traditional vices of selfishness and greed were the indispensable foundations of a commercially prosperous society. So he replaced Mandiville's notion of "vice" with the more palatable term "interest." Then he argued, much along the lines of Mandeville, that self-interested motives, operating through the framework of a free market, would produce socially beneficial consequences. In fact, Mandeville's concept that the pursuit of private gain leads to public welfare is the central premise of *The Wealth of Nations*, and economist Gary Becker told me that he regards it as "the most important idea in the social sciences in two and a half centuries."[35]

Smith adopted Mandeville's fundamental idea, namely, that the pursuit of individual self-interest produces social benefits, especially national wealth, as unintended consequences. *Individual self-interest*

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32. Mandeville, *Fable*, I, pp. 181–91, 229.
33. Rothbard, *Economic Thought Before Adam Smith*, I, pp. 421–22.
34. John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, [1936]), pp. 359–62.
35. Dinesh D'Sousa, *The Virtue of Prosperity: Finding Values in an Age of Techno-Affluence* (New York: Free Press, 2000), pp. 177–78.

within the framework of the free –"natural"—market was seen as ***reconciling the one and the many in society****, considered as an economic unit.* Smith reconstructed economic theory with this concept. He did not agree with Mandeville's emphasis on consumption as the source of public benefits. Smith emphasized production. But, because Smith identified consumption as the goal of all production,[36] he could not avoid becoming an extension of Mandeville. The enduring legacy of *The Wealth of Nations* is Smith's argument that the pursuit of individual self-interest in an unplanned free market system of voluntary exchange is the means of attaining greater national wealth. Three Nobel Prize-winning economists have agreed that this was Smith's enduring legacy: Becker, George Stigler, and Hayek, all of whom taught at the University of Chicago. Stigler put it this way in 1976, the 200th anniversary year of the publication of *Wealth of Nations*: "Smith had one overwhelmingly important triumph: he put into the center of economics the systematic analysis of the behavior of individuals pursuing their own self-interest under the conditions of competition."[37] Hayek put it somewhat differently in that same anniversary year: "The recognition that a man's efforts will benefit more people, and on the whole satisfy greater needs, when he lets himself be guided by the abstract signals of prices rather than by perceived needs, and that by this method we can best overcome our constitutional ignorance of most of the particular facts, and can make the fullest use of the knowledge of concrete circumstances widely dispersed among millions of individuals, is the great achievement of Adam Smith."[38]

Modern economists, in their desire to create a social science, have adopted the same myth of ethical neutrality that natural scientists have officially adopted. Economists speak of efficiency, not morality. But Smith's system had moral implications. It identified greater national wealth as a goal of deliberate political policy. He was arguing against the interventionist economics of mercantilism. His analysis offered solutions to two perennial philosophical problems, from the Greeks to the Enlightenment: (1) out of many, one; (2) out of greed, benefits. As Milton Mayer has written: "Adam Smith did not

36. "Consumption is the sole end and purpose of all production. . . ." Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Book IV, Chapter VIII, p. 625.

37. George Stigler, "The Successes and Failures of Professor Smith," *Journal of Political Economy*, 84 (December, 1976), p. 1201; cited in Mark Skousen, *The Making of Modern Economics* (Armonk, New York: Sharpe, 2001), p. 20.

38. Hayek, "Adam Smith's Message in Today's Language" (1976), in Hayek, *New Studies*, p. 269; *Collected Works*, III, p. 121.

believe that man was good. But he did not trouble himself to assert that man was bad. Man was—well, what we have always known him to be. His nature is evident through the whole of history. His motivation is self-interest, and that social system is best which turns that motivation to the best account. . . . If Smith was right, there would not be a New Man. There would be nothing new. Man's ingenuity would merely have adjusted him better to his environment."[39]

E. The New Man in Christ

This raises a question for Christian theology: What of the "new man" in Jesus Christ, i.e., regeneration? Paul wrote: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). What difference does regeneration make in social theory? From Mandeville to Mises, from Smith to Stigler, the answer of economists has been the same: none. They all use Ockham's razor to shave God out of their theories and equations. The evolutionist's cosmos, whether astronomical, biological, or social, is without design. There is no transcendence in the evolutionist's cosmos. There is only immanence: man, who has become god by default.

Free market capitalism as a social and legal system offers economic incentives to the masses of men to serve each other in a society-wide quest for individual wealth. Capitalism's success rests on the widespread acceptance of the formal goal of increased personal wealth, which is usually denominated by money. Capitalism has reduced poverty as no rival social system ever has. How? By legitimizing and institutionalizing the pursuit of self-interest, which is judicially indistinguishable from greed. The reduction of poverty has been the most universally accepted social objective in man's history, and also a universally accepted personal goal, monks excepted.

Paul knew, just as Jesus knew, that the personal goal of attaining temporal riches has always had more devotees than the personal goal of helping the poor. Free market capitalism accepts men as they are. It does not call for or expect men's regeneration by God's grace. Customers do not pay producers to change their minds regarding the benefits of getting rich or ignoring charity. Knowingly or not, customers use the producers' desire to get richer as their means of enticing producers to ever-greater levels of customer-satisfying service.

39. Milton Mayer, "The New Man," *The Great Ideas Today: 1966* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1966), pp. 134–35.

In short, *capitalism harnesses individual greed*. Capitalism has therefore served the public interest, as evaluated by self-interested customers. Capitalism has reduced poverty as never before in history, but it has also sanctioned greed, luring hundreds of millions of men into paths of unrighteousness—not unrighteousness in production (cheating), but unrighteousness in kingdom priorities. It is not that capitalism necessarily reduces the level of charitable giving, but it has unquestionably relegated charity to the shadows, both institutionally and theoretically. As surely as *The Wealth of Nations* put *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* in its shadow, so has it also put the New Testament's teaching on riches and charity in its shadow. This, despite the fact that Smith was revising the seventh edition of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* in the year of his death, 1790.[40] He ended his life's work trying to refute Mandeville's philosophical anarchism,[41] in the name of sympathy.[42] Yet his successors in nineteenth-century political economy and twentieth-century economics were far more sympathetic to Mandeville's view of human motivation than Smith's. Self-interest, not sympathy, became both the bedrock epistemological and ethical foundation of free market economic thought.

Men's desire to get richer, when coupled with the judicial enforcement of private ownership and private contracts, has become the most powerful explanatory device of economic theory. Capitalism's only widely accepted rival worldview—State central planning—has used the language of ethics and charity as a cover for the expansion of the political power of elite planners over the masses.[43] The invariable economic results of the command economy has been slower economic growth, at best, and mass starvation at worst. The political result has been the establishment of massive bureaucracy, sometimes leading to genocide.[44]

Under free market capitalism, the ethical motivation of service to others is subordinated both operationally and theoretically to the individual's quest for greater wealth. In the famous passage in *Wealth of Nations* that refers to the invisible hand, Smith wrote of the businessman that "he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in so many

40. E. G. West, "Introduction," Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Indianapolis, Indiana: LibertyClassics, 1976), p. 20.

41. Kaye, "Introduction," *Fable*, I, pp. lviii–lix.

42. Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, VII: IV.

43. F. A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944).

44. Stéphane Courtois, et al., *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999).

other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good."[45]Business charity is an afterthought—and, very often, it is little more than a public relations technique.[46] The right hand not only knows what the left hand is doing, it hires a full-time publicist to call the public's attention to what it is doing. In the final analysis, the accountant's profit-and-loss statement and balance sheet dominate the world of business. In the eminently practical science of accounting, form dominates substance. Its premier law is "by the numbers!" Nevertheless, the result of free market capitalism has been the creation of unprecedented wealth for hundreds of millions of people. Pareto's law of 20-80 income/wealth distribution has not been significantly altered by any modern society,[47] but total wealth has grown in the capitalist West for over two centuries. One estimate is that the growth rate has been 2.8% per annum.[48] If someone had invested $1,000 in 1750 at 2.8%, and then re-invested the earnings tax-free, the value of the capital in 2005 would be $1,143,521. This is more than a 1,000-fold increase in wealth.

What is said here of capitalism's sanctions of profit and loss also applies to every system of positive sanctions. Means and ends can easily be reversed in the plans of purposeful individuals. When men pursue the positive sanctions produced by righteousness rather than pursuing righteousness for God's sake, they fall into the same spiritual trap as the man who pursues riches by means of serving customers. Consider the student who studies to get good grades rather than mastering the material. This substitution of sanctions for substance is not an effective argument against grades in education. Consider the artist who violates his aesthetic standards in order to make a sale to a private art collector with poor taste. This is not an effective argument for tax-funded art. The substitution of formal institutional sanctions

45. Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, IV:II, p. 423.

46. This was one of Mandeville's arguments. *Fable*, I, p. 309.

47. Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923), an Italian sociologist-economist in Switzerland, discovered that 20% of a nation's population gained 80% of its income, in every European nation he studied in the late nineteenth century. Pareto, *Cours d' Economie Politique*, vol. 2 (Lausanne, 1897), pp. 370–72.

48. Walt W. Rostow, *The World Economy: History & Prospect* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), p. 48.

in place of personal performance standards is common to every institutional arrangement.

Nevertheless, free market capitalism is uniquely dangerous spiritually, for its underlying motivational force is man's desire for riches. The science of economics has been self-consciously constructed on the assumption of the pursuit of personal wealth as the supreme motivator. The performance of the free market social order also rests on this human motivation. The desire for money is the most universal form of sanctions-seeking—so universal that Christ identified it as Christianity's rival religion: mammon.[49] This is the religion of the great god More. Money is the most marketable commodity. It is the most representative form of all of the substitutes for God's saving grace that this world has to offer.

Christianity does not praise greed. On the contrary, it identifies greed as a great moral evil. Yet, in practice, as Mayer observed, "The Christianization of the Western world did not inhibit man's materialistic drive (or his materialistic devotion)."[50] But by the end of the twentieth century, it was becoming clear that humanism and materialism had replaced Christianity in Western Europe.

The Wealth of Nations was the most important document presenting the right-wing Enlightenment's social worldview, which was evolutionary. The book appeared after Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract* (1762), which was the left-wing Enlightenment's premier statement. The underlying model for Smith was Scottish Presbyterianism, with its congregational locus of initiation and its bottom-up appeals court system. The underlying model for Rousseau was the Jesuit order, with its top-down chain of command. Rousseau presented the case for the all-encompassing state. Smith presented the case for the near autonomy of the free market.

Rousseau offered a theory of the General Will, the disembodied and hypothetical will of the people as a collective entity. He did not offer an explanation for how state officials can speak accurately on behalf of the General Will. He offered no economic theory. Smith rested his case for the unplanned economic order squarely on acting individuals, whose voluntary exchanges are registered by means of prices, and whose motivations can be understood by the entrepreneur through introspection. Objective prices reflect objective condi-

49. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 14; North, *Treasure and Dominion*, ch. 38.

50. Mayer, "The New Man," *Great Ideas Today: 1966*, p. 144.

tions of supply and demand. Suppliers and customers are enabled by the price system to work out mutually agreeable transactions.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in December of 1991, the intellectual heirs of Rousseau have been left high and dry. Socialism's ideal of central planning is out of favor within the Western intelligentsia today, not because of economic analysis, which remains unpopular and barely understood by most intellectuals, but on the basis of the visible loss of power suffered by Communism's bureaucratic tyrants. This loss of power was the result of the Communists' loss of faith in Marxism-Leninism and the Communist economy's failure to produce wealth for the Communist Party's elite. Communism's leaders recognized at the 1980 Moscow Olympics that upper-middle-class Westerners had a higher standard of living than the top three percent of the Russian population: members of the Communist Party. High-ranking members of the Communist Party in 1991 decided to privatize the economy by transferring the ownership of the Communist Party's liquid capital to themselves. To justify this massive theft of the Party's assets, the Party's senior officers simultaneously reformed the entire Soviet economy, formally abandoning Communism, thereby establishing the legitimacy of private property and voluntary exchange. The Communist Party's apparatus disappeared in 1991, and so did its money.[51] Western commentators know nothing of this clandestine transfer of Party assets, but they do know that the Party officially committed suicide on August 23, 1991,[52] and also that the Russian economy was subsequently privatized.

F. Kingdoms in Conflict

Adam Smith's insight that societies can grow rich as a result of the individual's pursuit of self-interest within the context of a private property order is found in only three closely related texts in the Bible. They all have to do with money-lending.

> For the Lord thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee (Deut. 16:6).[53]

51. The story of the Party's disappearing funds was related to me by Anthony Easton, an American businessman who had long-term contacts with top Soviet leaders before and after 1991.

52. Michael Dobbs, *Down With Big Brother: The Fall of the Soviet Empire* (New York: Knopf, 1997), p. 417.

53. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 37.

> The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them (Deut. 28:12–13).[54]

> The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail (Deut. 28:43–44).[55]

Here, lenders are winners, and borrowers are losers. The context of the first and second passages is economic growth: God's visible, corporate blessing. The God-honoring society becomes rich and powerful, and its money-lenders do, too. They lend to covenant-breakers. The idea that both parties are beneficiaries of the transaction is not present in these passages.

Free market economic theory argues that voluntary transactions benefit both parties in terms of their goals. The Bible regards this outlook as short-sighted. The Bible looks at the longer-run implications of voluntary transactions. It does not accept the epistemological principle of the moral equality of all goals. It teaches a rival view: that which fosters an increase in capital leads to dominion, and is therefore preferable. That which sacrifices future income growth and influence on the altar of present consumption is a curse.[56] Corporate economic growth is seen as a benefit.

There are winners and losers in these passages. The fact that both parties gain their goals through exchange testifies to the fact that the lender has better long-run priorities than the borrower. The dividing issue here is *long-term dominion vs. immediate gratification*. Both the lender and the borrower get what they want, but what the lender wants is better because he is future-oriented.

1. Kingdoms and Eschatology

A related aspect of Christian righteousness is future-orientation regarding eternity. In the seventeenth century, Scottish Presbyterians began to proclaim optimism regarding the transformational effects of

54. *Ibid.*, ch. 69.
55. *Ibid.*, ch. 70.
56. Consumption is not utterly evil, for we must consume in order to live. But consumption without thrift is a moral evil except in a dire emergency (Prov. 13:22).

the kingdom of God in history. This is made clear in Answer 191 of the Larger Catechism (1647) regarding the meaning of the Lord's Prayer.

> Question 191: What do we pray for in the second petition?
>
> Answer: In the second petition (which is, Thy kingdom come,) acknowledging ourselves and all mankind to be by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, we pray, that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fulness of the Gentiles brought in; the church furnished with all gospel officers and ordinances, purged from corruption, countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate: that the ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed, and made effectual to the converting of those that are yet in their sins, and the confirming, comforting, and building up of those that are already converted: that Christ would rule in our hearts here, and hasten the time of his second coming, and our reigning with him forever: and that he would be pleased so to exercise the kingdom of his power in all the world, as may best conduce to these ends.

This is a postmillennial vision: "We pray, that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fulness of the Gentiles brought in." It assumes a literal fulfillment of Romans 11.[57] For the first time in Western history, we find a systematic theological application of Moses' doctrine of the long-term compound growth of righteousness in history (Deut. 28:1–14).[58] The West had not taken this doctrine literally prior to Scottish Presbyterianism, although there were some elements of postmillennial thinking in Calvin's writings.[59]

Postmillennialism has a crucial implication for economic theory: the possibility of compound economic growth as a product—a positive corporate sanction—of the extension of Christian righteousness in society. The possibility of irreversible compound economic growth was a unique underlying assumption of *The Wealth of Nations*. The preference for thrift over consumption for the sake of the capitalization of God's kingdom in history was an aspect of this outlook regarding the future. Smith secularized this economic implication of postmillennialism.

Christian postmillennialism stands in stark contrast to the social

57. North, *Cooperation and Dominion*, ch. 8.

58. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 69.

59. On this point, see Greg L. Bahnsen, "The Prima Facie Acceptance of Postmillennialism," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, III (Winter 1976–77), pp. 69–76. I argue that there were both amillennial and postmillennial arguments in Calvin's writings: "The Economic Thought of Luther and Calvin," *ibid*., II (Summer 1975), pp. 102–6.

evolutionism of the Scottish Enlightenment. The Scottish Enlightenment teaches that all social institutions that sustain human life are undesigned. They have come into existence as a result of historical circumstances. They are a combination of purposeful individual activities in the context of impersonal chance and impersonal natural law. Free market institutions are said to provide liberty and productivity, at least for today, but this could change at any time, depending on changes in circumstances: the environment, men's future-orientation, religious commitments, war, invasion, plague, and a host of other factors. In such a view, there is nothing predestined about progress. There is not even any agreed-upon definition of progress.

The only purpose in this Darwinian universe is life. Hayek wrote in his last book, as a heading: "*Life Has No Purpose But Itself*."[60] There is no meaning for history, other than species survival. This goal changes, depending on which species is on top. There is no moral order based on supernaturally revealed moral standards.[61] There are only rules of conduct[62] provided by an undesigned, self-organizing,[63] impersonal series of interdependent institutions. There are no predictable laws of evolution or historical development.[64] We can deal successfully with the unknown only by trusting in its impersonal operations. "For in fact we are able to bring about an ordering of the unknown *only by causing it to order itself*."[65] We must all do our duty, or at least we should—a duty defined by ourselves in terms of rules that have established by no one in particular for no long-run purpose other than the mere biological survival of the species. This, too, may pass. Hayek concluded:

> In any case, our desires and wishes are largely irrelevant. Whether we *desire* further increases of production and population or not, we must—merely to maintain existing numbers and wealth, and to protect them as best we can against calamity—strive after what, under favorable conditions, will come to lead, at least for some time, and in many places. to further increases.[66]

This is a social philosophy based on individual self-interest as both the foundation of economic analysis and the supreme motivating factor of human action, yet it ultimately is a philosophy of collec-

60. Hayek, *Fatal Conceit*, p. 133.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

tive survival. With respect to an individual's voluntary adherence to the undesigned institutional rules of conduct that keep most people alive,[67] Hayek wrote: "For these practices do not preserve *particular* lives but rather increase the *chances* (or prospects or probabilities) of the *group*."[68]

Hayek invoked the traditional authority provided by supernatural religion as an explanation for the origin of modern institutions.

> We owe it partly to mystical and religious beliefs, and, I believe, particularly to the main monotheistic ones, that beneficial traditions have been preserved and transmitted at least long enough to enable those groups following them to grow, and to have the opportunity to spread by natural or cultural selection.[69]

Yet Hayek abandoned such faith personally.[70] Why should men who share this humanist faith sacrifice to defend such a worldview? Try to persuade individuals who have adopted this dualistic philosophy of individual self-interest, undesigned institutions, impersonal rules of conduct, and devoid of supernatural morality or support, to lay down their lives in defense of this philosophy of life, especially after they have grown soft from the luxuries that the free market produces. Try to recruit an army with this philosophy when a nation is under attack. As a social philosophy for a world where organized corporate bloodshed often determines national survival, right-wing Enlightenment thought is surely a weak reed to lean on.

2. Kingdoms and Capital

Kingdoms must be funded. They require capital. In the case of money-lending, we see dominion through the economic subordination of borrowers. In this instance, subordination is anti-dominion. The presumption here is that the debtor is present-oriented, which implies his subordination to sin. The borrower is, in Mises' terms, a high time-preference individual.[71] This leads to his progressive subordination to future-oriented, low time-preference lenders.[72]

The Bible offers a major challenge to Smith's assumption that the goal of all production is consumption. Smith wrote: "Consumption

67. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
70. *Ibid.*, pp. 56, 139.
71. On time-preference, see Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action: A Treatise on Economics* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1949), ch. 18:2.
72. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 37.

is the sole end and purpose of all production. . . ."[73] The Bible does not teach this doctrine. On the contrary, it teaches that a major goal of production is the extension of the kingdom of God in history. *One goal of production is dominion, which comes at the expense of personal consumption*. Dominion is financed through a refusal to consume: thrift. The long-term accumulation of capital is a means of dominion. This dominion is achieved through inheritance. "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just" (Prov. 13:22).[74]

The Bible teaches that kingdom-extension should be a motivation greater than personal self-interest. The covenant-keeper is supposed to lend; the covenant-breaker is supposed to borrow. There is no compulsion, but God's kingdom is extended through trade. The covenant-breaker consumes; the covenant-keeper invests. ***Capital** should be regarded primarily as **a tool of greater future dominion**, not as a means of greater future consumption*. This is why borrowing to finance one's education or to build a business is legitimate. The debt is not for consumption. Conclusion: *the more capital that one possesses, the higher the percentage that should be allocated for dominion*. Consumption remains low; production constantly increases. The super-rich have little choice but to honor this principle. Their capital compounds faster than they can spend the money it produces.

Murray Rothbard rejected Smith's theory of productive vs. unproductive labor. He explained it as a product of Smith's Calvinism.[75] This is a strange argument to come from the first historian of economic thought to discuss in detail the theological liberalism of Smith and the other Scottish Enlightenment figures. Smith distinguished conceptually between labor aimed at the production of capital goods vs. labor aimed at the immediate satisfaction of customer demand. Analytically, the distinction is fallacious in a system of economics which teaches that consumption is the sole end of production. But, as a recommendation of deferred gratification over immediate consumption, this conceptual distinction is revealing. Smith, despite his theological liberalism, did indeed reveal a trace of Calvinism. Rothbard writes, "It is Calvinism that scorns man's consumption and pleasure, and stresses the importance of labour virtually for its own sake."

73. Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, IV:VIII, p. 625.

74. Gary North, *Wisdom and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Proverbs*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2007] 2012), ch. 41.

75. Rothbard, *Economic Thought Before Adam Smith*, p. 457.

This is rhetoric, not argument. Calvinism scorns sin. It praises righteousness. Calvinism praises work as an alternative to sin. "The devil loves idle hands." Calvinism also understands that productive work produces happiness. "Busy hands are happy hands." Calvin wrote of the curse of the ground: "And yet the asperity of this punishment also is mitigated by the clemency of God, because something of the enjoyment is blended with the labours of men, lest they should be altogether ungrateful. . . ."[76] Work is a positive good in itself.

3. Kingdoms and Exchange

It is hardly intuitive to go from an exposition of the passages on money-lending to a conclusion that self-interested exchange within a private property society leads to greater wealth for all, or almost all. This was not a notion familiar to seventeenth-century mercantilists, nor was it familiar to generations of moral theorists who preceded them. The traditional view of exchange was that the one party to the exchange profits at the expense of the other. This was a false application of a true principle: one spiritual kingdom profits at the expense of the other.

The two supernatural kingdoms are in conflict in history. One area of this conflict is economic growth. One kingdom grows in influence at the expense of the other. In this sense, it is true that the winner wins at the expense of the loser. But it is also true that individuals achieve their goals through voluntary exchange. This seeming contradiction is resolved by an understanding of eschatology: the meek— meek before God—will inherit the earth. The members of each kingdom purchase what they want most, and they do so less expensively because of voluntary exchanges with each other. One society is more present-oriented than another. The members of each society achieve their goals less expensively through voluntary exchange across borders.

If the war is between kingdoms, then the mercantilists were right in this sense: *one kingdom advances at the expense of the other*. Where they were wrong was in seeing state-regulated international trade as a way to build up one political kingdom and weaken rival kingdoms by exporting goods and importing gold. Smith demolished that argument. Wealth is a much broader category than gold. But the mercantilists could have countered Smith by substituting money-lending for imported gold, assuming that the money would not be confiscated

76. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, [1563] 1979), I, p. 174.

by the borrowers through default. *A society that runs an international accounts surplus is pursuing a dominion policy*. But for this to be true, the accounts surplus must be the result of voluntary exchange, not rigged markets, hidden subsidies, and other forms of state intervention.

The biblical position is that voluntary exchange weakens Satan's kingdom and strengthens God's kingdom whenever the members of the two kingdoms are working consistently towards their respective goals in terms of their rival presuppositions, laws, and sanctions. Ethically self-conscious covenant-keepers win in history, and ethically self-conscious covenant-breakers lose. (This assessment assumes the truth of postmillennialism.)[77] Lenin supposedly said that the Communists would hang the capitalists with the rope that the capitalists would sell to them. He was correct in his assessment of the conflict between two social orders. He was incorrect with respect to the one that possessed the covenantal means of victory. His did not.

G. Self-Interest and National Wealth

In the Bible, there are repeated calls for self-sacrificing service. There are repeated calls to show charity to the poor. The Mosaic law identified a connection between charity and personal economic success. "Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto" (Deut. 15:9–10). But there is no indication in the Bible that by allowing the free reign of personal self-interest, a society creates a system through which the vast mass of humanity can get rich over time. This long-unperceived relationship between personal self-interest and national wealth is what Mandeville saw in 1705, Smith saw in 1776, and what capitalism has accomplished since 1776.

Mandeville offered this insight with regard to customer demand ("vices") and the demand for labor ("public benefits"). Then Smith took the relationship back one step to the producer's motivation (greed), which leads him to seek to increase output inexpensively (efficiency). Theologians and social theorists who relied exclusively on the

77. Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *He Shall Have Dominion: A Postmillennial Eschatology*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1992] 1997).

Bible for information about economics had not perceived a cause-and-effect relationship between individual self-interest and national wealth. They had at best seen the Mosaic law's cause-and-effect relationship between covenantal corporate blessings and individual economic blessings. Smith's *methodological individualism* led him to argue for economic causality that begins with *individual self-interest*. So does the Mosaic law. Smith argued that voluntary trade accomplishes the feat. The Mosaic law argued that corporate covenant-keeping accomplishes it. Smith told men to become efficient. Moses told them to become righteous. Smith's saw the free market as natural, the "natural system of liberty." The Bible sees the natural man as sinful and self-destructive (Prov. 8:36).

In a roundabout way, the Bible does promote individual service to customers as the road to personal wealth. The model is as follows: (1) service to others, including honest dealing, which produces (2) God's blessings, including wealth, for the entire society, which produces (3) individual wealth. Smith restructured this model: (1) service to others, including honest dealing, which produces (2) individual wealth, which produces (3) wealth for the entire society. God and His personal sanctions were not part of Smith's analytical model in *The Wealth of Nations*. Smith's theory of economic sanctions is personal, in the sense of purposeful, with respect to a society's self-interested individuals, but it is impersonal with respect to a nation. His individualist methodology and its theory of collective impersonalism were both aspects of the Scottish Enlightenment. In the words of that other Adam, Ferguson, society is the result of human action, but not human design.

The Scottish Enlightenment's theorists did not limit their discussion of the spontaneous order to economics. They also included language, social institutions, and legal institutions. Ronald Hamowy summarizes their position and its underlying motivation. "The theory, simply put, holds that the social arrangements under which we live are of such a high order of complexity that they invariably take their form not from deliberate calculation, but as the unintended consequences of countless individual actions, many of which may be the result of instinct and habit. This theory thus provides an explanation of the origin of complex structures without the need to posit the existence of a directing intelligence."[78]

Smith explained the wealth of nations in terms of the wealth of

78. Ronald Hamowy, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the Theory of Spontaneous Order* (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press for the Journal of the History of Philosophy, 1987), p. 3.

individuals. Wealth was seen by Smith as a universally acknowledged benefit. Few would argue with him today. Economic growth is indeed perceived as a benefit, "other things being equal." Only a handful of radical ecologists[79] and zero-growth economists reject the goal of increasing per capita wealth.

What places Smith's system in opposition to the Bible is its cosmic impersonalism. God is analytically irrelevant in *The Wealth of Nations*. Smith explained the wealth of nations as the impersonal result of individuals' competition in the free market, rather than as the result of God's covenantal system of cause and effect. He substituted the accountant's profit-and-loss statement and balance sheet for the common grace of God: the grace of covenant law.

Years ago, I wrote an essay on the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:33–35). The good Samaritan, unlike the priest and the Levite, showed mercy to a beaten man at the side of the road. He washed his wounds and placed him on his donkey. He took him to an inn, and told the inn-keeper that he would pay for the man's care until he got well. I noted that nobody ever talks about the inn-keeper and his motivation. The parable rests on an assumption: there are inn-keepers out there who are ready and willing to assist good Samaritans as paid agents of mercy. Their motivation is not mercy; it is income. The work of the world's good Samaritans is made easier by inn-keepers.[80]

The division of labor in society must be governed by some system of cause and effect. There is always a system of sanctions. Economists eventually are forced to deal with the question of sanctions. (1) "Which sanctions provide the greatest incentive to cooperate with others?" (2) "Which system of ownership best incorporates these sanctions?" These are basic questions of economics. The answer to the first question is "profit and loss." The answer to the second is clear: "free market capitalism." This was the conclusion of Scholastic theologians in the Middle Ages. It was the answer of the Jesuit scholars at the School of Salamanca in the sixteenth century.[81] It was the answer of Adam Smith. But, in Smith's system, these sanctions are applied by customers through an autonomous free market. These sanctions supposedly operate irrespective of the participants' per-

79. They call themselves "deep ecologists."

80. See North, *Treasure and Dominion*, ch. 21.

81. Alejandro Chafuen, *Christians for Freedom: Late Scholastic Economics* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986). Jesus Huerta de Soto, "Juan de Mariana: The Influence of the Spanish Scholastics," in Randall G. Holcombe (ed.), *15 Great Austrian Economists* (Auburn, Alabama: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 1999), ch. 1.

sonal ethics or cosmic law. This was not his argument in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, which relied on the doctrine of God's providence in promoting the harmony of interests, but it was his analytical framework in *The Wealth of Nations*. I agree with the great historian of economic thought, Jacob Viner. The two books are quite different. Anyone seeking to reconcile them will fail, just as Smith failed in the last year of his life, when he revised the former.[82]

Conclusion

Self-interest is basic to biblical law, which is why there are covenant sanctions. It is basic to Jesus' theory of God's final judgment (Matt. 25).

There can be no social theory that has no system of sanctions. Economic theory since Adam Smith has rested heavily on a theory of market-imposed sanctions: profit and loss. Socialists have denied the legitimacy of these sanctions, preferring instead the state's imposition of violence as the best way to shape the economy's output and consumption patterns. The personal will of central planners is substituted for the impersonal competitive pressures of the free market. The result is always slow economic growth and the loss of liberty.

By the final decade of the twentieth century, the academic defenders of the generally unhampered free market faced intellectual competition mainly from defenders of a semi-regulated free market. Both groups rested the case for economic growth on the profit-seeking self-interest of individuals.

The Bible does not deny that self-interest is the primary motivation of most men most of the time. It also does not call for state interference with this motivation, just so long as the resulting actions are peaceful and not fraudulent or inherently immoral. But the Bible warns men not to trust in the uncertain temporal riches that are the product of all of those self-interested actions by profit-seeking men.

The Bible does not teach that the self-interested pursuit of wealth will somehow make a nation poorer, assuming that immoral behavior is penalized by civil law. Instead, the Bible warns against great wealth, whether personal or corporate, that is not the product of the grace-empowered, self-interested obedience of covenant-keepers to God's biblical laws. The Bible does not mention the possibility that the self-interested pursuit of personal wealth in the context of pri-

82. Jacob Viner, "Adam Smith and Laissez Faire" (1927), in Viner, *The Long View and the Short: Studies in Economic Theory and Policy* (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1958), pp. 220–22, 224–26, 229–31.

vate ownership is the indispensable key to attaining an increase of national wealth. This insight was Bernard Mandeville's, which Smith amplified. The Bible does not deny this possibility, but it does not suggest it or recommend it.

Smith secularized economic theory by substituting the idea of an autonomous, impersonal free market economy for the covenantal providence of God. He sacrificed on the altar of human autonomy the idea of God's providential social order. The other Scottish Enlightenment theorists agreed with him. Only David Hume, skeptic that he was, believed that the perceived social order, as with all perceived order, is merely an unproven assumption of the human mind. But Hume was nevertheless a defender of free trade. He used economic arguments to defend his position, a quarter century before his friend Adam Smith wrote *The Wealth of Nations*.[83]

Smith's economic analysis is humanistic, but at least it is neither socialism nor Keynesianism, both of which are equally humanistic, and which expand the power of the state, confiscate private property on a massive scale, and place responsibility for men's economic futures into the hands of self-interested economic planners who possess the monopolistic power of the state to impose their system of economic sanctions. Better to trust the self-interested motivation of the butcher, the brewer, and the baker for our dinner than to trust self-interested tenured state bureaucrats who are protected by Civil Service laws against being fired. Better to rely a businessman who prefers to say "yes" to every request to buy something, and who then scurries around to find a way to deliver, than to ask a bureaucrat to be allowed to do something, who automatically says "no" because it is less controversial to retreat later from "no" to "yes" than it is to retreat from "yes" to "no." No bureaucrat ever gets fired for initially saying "no."

The Bible affirms the legitimacy of private ownership. It mandates civil penalties on convicted thieves. It does not sanction or recommend state-mandated programs of wealth-redistribution. The Mosaic law established a legal order in which individual self-interest will flourish. The Mosaic law also promised increased corporate wealth for widespread corporate obedience to God's law. The New Testament does not abrogate the Mosaic law's system of private ownership, nor does it elevate the state into an agency of charity.

When it comes to a consideration of individual motivation, both Testaments warn against the desire to become rich. Both Testaments

83. David Hume, "Of the Balance of Trade" (1752).

regard personal riches with suspicion, and morally legitimate only as the result of God's blessings, with Abraham as the model. "And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (Gen. 13:2). In short, the Bible promotes service to others, including economic service, as morally mandatory, but it does not recommend service to others as a way for the individual to get rich. On the other hand, it does recommend charity and honest dealing (weights and measures) as marks of obedience to God's law. Widespread obedience to God's law is the basis of corporate wealth, and therefore also individual wealth. *The correct goal is the extension of God's kingdom in history, not personal wealth*. The positive sanction is personal wealth, but this sanction is not the goal. It is only the means. Dominion in history by covenant-keepers under God is the biblically correct goal.

Scottish Enlightenment theorists—Hume excepted—invoked a deistic god as a theoretical backdrop for nature, but this god supposedly plays no role in directing the development of society. There is no supernatural invisible hand, only social evolution, which is as blind as Darwin's natural selection was said to be a century later. There is no cosmic process in nature or history, according to the Enlightenment's Scots. There are only individual purposes in a competitive social order. Individual dominion is by service, but this is profit-seeking service in a free market. As for national dominion, according to the Scots, this has more to do with the legal order, the creativity of individuals, and the productivity of the land, all within the international division of labor, than it does with the plans of a monarch and his subordinate supernatural agents. Individual production is for individual final consumption, not individual final judgment at the corporate resurrection.

The Bible teaches design by God, the providence of God, and absolute predestination by God. It teaches *cosmic personalism*.[84] It also teaches absolute individual responsibility, for it teaches final judgment. The Bible teaches *covenantalism*, not individualism or collectivism. It teaches the Trinity, which implies the equal ultimacy of the one and the many. Covenants apply to individuals and societies because covenants are established by one God in three persons. God judges societies and individuals in history. "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him" (Ezek. 21:27). It is possible to get one out of many through voluntary contracts (Mises) only because it is possible to get one out of many through voluntary covenants (Moses).

84. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, ch. 1.

APPENDIX D

SLAVERY AS A CAUSE OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

Was the American war, 1861–1865, a civil war? Was it a war of Southern secession? Was it a war of Northern aggression? I answer: yes. It was a civil war because it was a war over the collection and distribution of taxes. The state is all about taxation: a monopoly over violence that is funded by the compulsory collection of revenues. Who receives what portion of these revenues, and who pays what portion, are the continuing twin themes of politics down through the ages. It was a civil war because contending parties went to war over this judicial issue: *the right to collect tariffs*. It was no accident that the first shots of the war were artillery shells fired by the state of South Carolina onto an island in Charleston Harbor. This island was the place where the United States government had a military base for the enforcement of the collection of tariffs in the Port of Charleston. This was the largest port on the South's eastern coast. The other major Southern port was New Orleans.

A. Tariffs

Abraham Lincoln was determined that these sales taxes on imported goods would be collected by, and distributed by, the United States government. The state of South Carolina disputed this claim militarily, beginning on April 12, 1861, at 4:30 a.m.

Tariffs were more than a symbol of national sovereignty. They were the lifeblood of the U.S. Government's redistribution of wealth. Charles Adams' book, *When in the Course of Human Events* (2000), on the role of tariff collection as Lincoln's motivation to resist South Carolina's secession, has certainly added long-neglected information to this ancient debate over the cause(s) of that war. But this motivation

does not explain why the other Southern states joined with South Carolina's government in declaring secession. To the extent that the war was a war of Southern secession, it had a motive more compelling psychologically than the sovereign right of the South to collect tariffs.

Nevertheless, there is no question that the South regarded tariffs differently from the outlook of Whigs and Republicans in the North. The Confederate Constitution of 1861 specifically limited tariffs and export fees to revenue-generating devices for the national government.[1] Tariffs by law were not to be used to aid private industry.[2] The South's tariff rates were much lower than what the U.S. government had imposed.[3] Despite the North's naval blockade, in 1863, customs duties brought in almost a million dollars to the Confederate Treasury.[4] Compared to the overall cost of the war, this revenue was minimal.

When men go to war and fight a war, they seek the moral high ground. Lincoln did not go to war officially, and especially rhetorically, for the defense of the collection of tariffs. The South did not go to war to defend its right to collect tariffs and impose export duties. Then why did the South secede? Why were Southern leaders prepared to lead the region into a war? They knew that Lincoln could not mobilize the North to fight and die for the collection of tariffs. Then why was the South prepared to fight? Why did the South believe that the North was willing to fight?

B. John Brown's Raid

John Brown's 1859 raid at Harpers Ferry, Virginia (later West Virginia) sent shock waves through the South. The raid led to the formation of Southern militias.

Brown was a murderer. Three years earlier, on May 24, 1856, he

1. Article I, Section 10, Clause 2 specified that revenues generated by tariffs, except for each state's costs of collection, belonged to the national government.

2. Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 stated: "nor shall any duties or taxes on importations from foreign nations be laid to promote or foster any branch of industry; and all duties, imposts, and excises shall be uniform throughout the Confederate States." Clause 3 stated: "neither this, nor any other clause contained in the Constitution, shall ever be construed to delegate the power to Congress to appropriate money for any internal improvement intended to facilitate commerce; except for the purpose of furnishing lights, beacons, and buoys, and other aids to navigation upon the coasts, and the improvement of harbors and the removing of obstructions in river navigation; in all which cases such duties shall be laid on the navigation facilitated thereby as may be necessary to pay the costs and expenses thereof." *Idemл*

3. Robert A. McGuire and T. Norman Van Cott, "The Confederate Constitution, Tariffs, and the Laffer Relationship," *Economic Inquiry*, XL (July 2002), pp. 428–38.

4. *Report of the Secretary of the Treasury* (Dec. 7, 1863).

and his four sons had hacked five unarmed men to death outside their homes in Kansas, all in the name of abolitionism. None of the five owned slaves, but they supported slavery. Brown was funded by a group of Unitarian ministers, known in retrospect as the Secret Six. The best study of this group and its funding of Brown is Otto Scott's book, *The Secret Six* (1979).

Scott once told me that in his manuscript, he inserted the word "Rev." in front of the names of those Secret Six members who were ordained. When the page proofs were sent back from Times Books, the book publishing arm of the *New York Times*, the word "Rev." had been removed. Scott re-inserted it into the page proofs, but the editor refused to allow this. When Scott got his author's copy of the book, the offending but revealing "Rev." was still missing. (Scott later bought back all copies of the book from Times Books.)

Scott's book has another revelation about the raid and its effects. This may be the most important observation in the book. Scott, as a lifelong journalist, contends that the Northern press was almost universally favorable to Brown. The Northern press created the legend of Brown as a near-messianic liberator. This, Scott believes, was the American press' first foray into domestic revolution as a messianic movement. It marks the turning point in American journalism, when the press discovered its power to shape events.

The South perceived the Northern press' response as a harbinger of Federally imposed abolitionism. If the North was ready to condone a private citizen's self-conscious attempt to foment a bloody uprising of slaves in the South, then the abolitionist movement had moved over the edge. From that point on, the South prepared for an escalation of violence from northern abolitionists.

The United States government under President James Buchanan did send troops to Harpers Ferry to quell the mini-revolution—troops led by Col. Robert E. Lee. But the election of Lincoln in 1860 was seen by most of the South's leaders as the end of toleration of the South's way of life, which rested on "the peculiar institution." They correctly saw that the North's constitutional compromise in 1787 over the issue of private chattel slavery, as well as the subsequent legislative compromises of 1820 and 1850, were about to be superseded politically. Slavery would be prohibited by law in the western territories. Incoming western states would be formed from these slave-free territories. The South would steadily lose its near-equality of representation in Congress. The Republican Party's platform in 1860 declared:

> 8. That the normal condition of all the territory of the United States is that of freedom; That as our Republican fathers, when they had abolished slavery in all our national territory, ordained that "no person should be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law," it becomes our duty, by legislation, whenever such legislation is necessary, to maintain this provision of the Constitution against all attempts to violate it; and we deny the authority of Congress, of a territorial legislature, or of any individuals, to give legal existence to Slavery in any Territory of the United States.

The South was correct in its assessment of the future of the politics of abolitionism. The Republican Party had the votes in 1860, and its anti-slavery agenda would surely shape America's political future. Slavery by 1860 was doomed politically in the United States. Congress would no longer allow the extension of slavery westward. Neither, for that matter, would rainfall. East Texas was the far edge of slavery. The political majority of the nation would become ever more anti-slavery as each new state entered the Union. Congress would eventually do what Parliament had done in 1833: abolish slavery. The only question was whether slave owners would be paid, as British West Indies slave owners had been paid. The South seceded to forestall this development, as their leaders said repeatedly.[5] Southern leaders created the Confederacy to maintain slavery. The Old South died when that call to moral action brought General Sherman to Georgia.

The North was dragged into the war by Lincoln's decision to use military force to suppress secession. Lincoln had a messianic view of the Union. His rhetoric repeatedly revealed this commitment. Tariffs were the primary source of income for the Union, and he was determined to preserve the Union and the tariff as well. The two were an indissoluble unity in Lincoln's mind: Union and tariff. His rhetoric invoked the Union, not the tariff. But in his inaugural address of 1861, he made it clear that he was willing to fight to collect the tariff:

> In doing this there needs to be no bloodshed or violence, and there shall be none unless it be forced upon the national authority. The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects, there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere.

Two days earlier, President James Buchanan had signed a new law that more than doubled the tariff rate—15% to 37%—and extended it

5. See below, "Official Declarations in the South."

to many new items. A month later, South Carolina fired on Ft. Sumter. But South Carolina had already seceeded by the time the new tariff act was passed and signed into law.

It was the greatest tragedy in American history that John Brown succeeded in transforming a moral and political issue that might have been settled peacefully into a secessionist movement in the South, which in turn brought on the Civil War. Brown's career, more than any man's career in American history, supports the truth of an institutional principle that professional agitator Saul Alinsky, a century later, used to shape his own career: "The action is the reaction."

Brown laid down his life for a cause: abolitionism. In his final address to the court (Nov. 2, 1859), he insisted that he never wanted to hurt anyone, or commit treason, "or incite slaves to rebellion." His murderous career in Kansas testified against him. So did the fact that Harpers Ferry was the location of the United States Armory and Arsenal, which his gang of 22 men had seized. He was tried and convicted for this crime and the deaths that ensued. Brown wanted a revolutionary purging of the South in order to extirpate slavery. He got what he wanted because the South reacted on cue, as if choreographed. When Lincoln was elected the next year, the secessionists took the step that brought down the wrath of Lincoln on their heads. The War of Northern Aggression transformed Lincoln from a tax collector into the abolitionist that Southerners had always claimed that he was, even though he wasn't. Brown-Lincoln-Secession-Aggression: *the action was the reaction*—a chain reaction. It cost the lives of at least 620,000 soldiers.

The Secret Six collected a huge pay-off from their financial investments in John Brown. One of them, Rev. Thomas Wentworth Higginson (1823–1911), became a colonel in the Union Army, a major literary figure, and, in 1905, signed the "Call" that led to the founding of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, along with novelists Upton Sinclair and Jack London, and defense lawyer Clarence Darrow.[6]

C. Official Declarations in the South

The North did not go to war to suppress slavery, but the South did go to war to defend slavery. Had abolitionism not been the hottest political issue in the Northern press in 1859–60, the election of Lincoln would not have resulted in secession.

6. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Nature of the American System* (Vallecito, California: Ross House Books, [1965] 2000), p. 19.

The crucial motivating issue for Southern politicians in 1860–61 was the defense of slavery. While this truth became politically incorrect in the South after 1865, the South's representatives made their position clear in 1860–61. Major declarations regarding the cause of the war were published by the seceding states. Here are some examples: Mississippi, Texas, Kentucky, Louisiana, and South Carolina.

> [Mississippi] Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery—the greatest material interest of the world. Its labor supplies the product which constitutes by far the largest and most important portions of commerce of the earth. These products are peculiar to the climate verging on the tropical regions, and by an imperious law of nature, none but the black race can bear exposure to the tropical sun. These products have become necessities of the world, and a blow at slavery is a blow at commerce and civilization. That blow has been long aimed at the institution, and was at the point of reaching its consummation. There was no choice left us but submission to the mandates of abolition, or a dissolution of the Union, whose principles had been subverted to work out our ruin.[7]

> [Texas] Texas abandoned her separate national existence and consented to become one of the Confederated States to promote her welfare, insure domestic tranquillity and secure more substantially the blessings of peace and liberty to her people. She was received into the confederacy with her own constitution under the guarantee of the federal constitution and the compact of annexation, that she should enjoy these blessings. She was received as a commonwealth holding, maintaining and protecting the institution known as negro slavery—the servitude of the African to the white race within her limits—a relation that had existed from the first settlement of her wilderness by the white race, and which her people intended should exist in all future time. Her institutions and geographical position established the strongest ties between her and other slave-holding States of the confederacy. Those ties have been strengthened by association. But what has been the course of the government of the United States, and of the people and authorities of the nonslaveholding States, since our connection with them?...
>
> In all the non-slave-holding States, in violation of that good faith and comity which should exist between entirely distinct nations, the people have formed themselves into a great sectional party, now strong enough in numbers to control the affairs of each of those States, based upon the unnatural feeling of hostility to these Southern States and their beneficent and patriarchal system of African slavery, proclaiming the debasing doctrine of the equality of all men, irrespective of race or color—a doctrine at war with nature, in opposition to the experience of mankind, and in vio-

7. For this statement, plus statements from South Carolina and Georgia, see: avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/csapage.asp (accessed January 16, 2021).

> lation of the plainest revelations of the Divine Law. (A declaration of the causes which impel the State of Texas to secede from the Federal Union, Feb. 2, 1861.)[8]

The Governor of Kentucky, on December 28, 1860, wrote this defense of slavery, although the the state legislature in November had pledged neutrality:

> The rights of African slavery in the United States and the relations of the Federal Government to it, as an institution in the States and Territories, most assuredly demand at this time explicit definition and final recognition by the North. The slave-holding States are now impelled by the very highest law of self-preservation to demand that this settlement should be concluded upon such a basis as shall not only conserve the institution in localities where it is now recognized, but secure its expansion, under no other restrictions than those which the laws of nature may throw around it. That unnecessary conflict between free labor and slave labor, but recently inaugurated by the Republican party as an element in our political struggles, must end, and the influence of soil, of climate, and local interests left unaided and unrestricted save by constitutional limitations to control the extension of slavery over the public domain. The war upon our social institutions and their guaranteed immunities waged through the Northern press, religious and secular, and now threatened to be conducted by a dominant political organization through the agency of State Legislatures and the Federal Government must be ended. Our safety, our honor, and our self-preservation alike demand that our interests be placed beyond the reach of further assault.[9]

George Williamson, a Commissioner of the State of Louisiana, delivered this message to fellow delegates in Austin, Texas, at a joint state meeting to consider secession.

> The people of the slaveholding States are bound together by the same necessity and determination to preserve African slavery. The isolation of any one of them from the others would make her a theatre for abolition emissaries from the North and from Europe. Her existence would be one of constant peril to herself and of imminent danger to other neighboring slave-holding communities. . . . Her interests are identical with Texas and the seceding States. With them she will at present co-operate, hoping and believing in his own good time God will awaken the people of the border States to the vanity of asking for, or depending upon, guarantees or compromises wrung from a people whose consciences are too sublimated to be

8. Texas Ordinance of Secession (Feb. 2, 1861).

9. Transcribed and proofed from *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series IV, vol. I, pp. 11–15. See also: civilwarcauses.org/magoffin.htm (accessed January 16, 2021).

> bound by that sacred compact, the constitution of the late United States. That constitution the Southern States have never violated, and taking it as the basis of our new government we hope to form a slave-holding confederacy that will secure to us and our remotest posterity the great blessings its authors designed in the Federal Union. With the social balance wheel of slavery to regulate its machinery, we may fondly indulge the hope that our Southern government will be perpetual.[10]

Was secession primarily a matter of commerce? Charles Adams, who has spent his career studying the evil effects of taxes, said that it was. None of the South's spokesmen of the era agreed with him, except in the sense of commerce in slaves. Was secession a battle over the tariff? This issue was addressed by former Congressman Lawrence Keitt during South Carolina's debate over secession, on December 22, 1860. Keitt had become legendary in South Carolina four years earlier, when he had physically intervened to keep anyone from coming to the defense of Senator Sumner of Massachusetts, while South Carolina's Congressman Preston Brooks was beating Sumner's head with a cane, crippling him, after Sumner had delivered an anti-slavery speech on the floor of the Senate.[11] Brooks and Keitt were both censured by the House of Representatives, resigned, and were immediately re-elected. They returned to Congress. Keitt died at the battle of Cold Harbor in 1864. He did not die for the cause of tariff reform.

> But the Tariff is not the question which brought the people up to their present attitude. We are to give a summary of our causes to the world, but mainly to the other Southern States, whose co-action we wish, and we must not make a fight on the Tariff question.[12]

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10. Address of George Williamson, Commissioner from Louisiana, written Feb,. 11, 1861, and presented to the Texas Secession Convention 9 Mar 1861, from E. W. Winkler (ed.), *Journal of the Secession Convention of Texas*, pp. 120–123.

11. The Charleston, South Carolina *Mercury* (May 28, 1856), gleefully reported the event. "... Mr. KEITT was at the remotest corner of the room, with the President's desk intervening; so he did not even see the beginning of the attack. Hearing the blows of the cane and the cries of SUMNER, he hurried to the spot, and found Senator FOSTER, of Connecticut, and an officer of the Senate, attempting to grasp BROOKS, when he threw himself between them, and ordered them back at their personal risk. They immediately desisted, and BROOKS flogged SUMNER without any interference.... The whole South sustains BROOKS, and a large part of the North also. All feel that it is time for freedom of speech and freedom of the cudgel to go together." (Transcribed from the Charleston, South Carolina, *Mercury*, 28 May 1856, by T. Lloyd Benson.)

12. S.C. Secession *Declaration Debate* (Transcribed by Ben Barnhill, Furman University from the Charleston, South Carolina, Courier, Dec. 22, 1860.)

His cause was the defense of slavery. The previous January 25, he had addressed his fellow Congressman:

> African slavery is the corner-stone of the industrial, social, and political fabric of the South; and whatever wars against it, wars against her very existence. Strike down the institution of African slavery and you reduce the South to depopulation and barbarism. . . . The anti-slavery party contend that slavery is wrong in itself, and the Government is a consolidated national democracy. We of the South contend that slavery is right, and that this is a confederate Republic of sovereign States.[13]

On December 24, 1860, South Carolina's legislature issued its defense of secession, becoming the first state to secede. There was not one word about the tariff. There was this regarding slavery:

> We affirm that these ends for which this Government was instituted have been defeated, and the Government itself has been made destructive of them by the action of the non-slaveholding States. Those States have assume the right of deciding upon the propriety of our domestic institutions; and have denied the rights of property established in fifteen of the States and recognized by the Constitution; they have denounced as sinful the institution of slavery; they have permitted open establishment among them of societies, whose avowed object is to disturb the peace and to eloign the property of the citizens of other States. They have encouraged and assisted thousands of our slaves to leave their homes; and those who remain, have been incited by emissaries, books and pictures to servile insurrection.[14]

After 1865, all leading Southerners except Rev. Robert L. Dabney, the South's leading Presbyterian theologian and a former aid to Stonewall Jackson, reversed themselves publicly, claiming that slavery had not been the cause of secession. The cause had been a defense of state's rights or some other Constitutional justification.[15] A kind of selective regional amnesia took place in the South. What had been regarded as high moral ground in 1861 had become the lowest moral ground in 1865.

The looming defeat of the Confederacy after the fall of Atlanta in September of 1864 had begun to shake the confidence of some Southern ministers. They began to express doubts from the pulpit regard-

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13. *Congressional Globe*. civilwarcauses.org/quotes.htm (accessed January 16, 2021).

14. Confederate States of America Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union (Adopted December 24, 1860).

15. The classic post-war statement was written by the lawyer, Alexander H. Stephens, who served as Vice President of the Confederacy before he quit in disgust: *A Constitutional View of the Late War Between the States*, 2 vols. (1867, 1870).

ing the legitimacy of slavery.[16] It is always a tragedy when a Christian society learns its theology by losing to an enemy on a military battlefield. The South changed its theology,[17] its social ethics,[18] and its politics[19] because of General William Tecumseh Sherman's victory in Atlanta. Without that victory, Lincoln would have lost the Presidential election of November, 1864, and the North probably would have come to terms with the South's secession. But Sherman won, and then Lincoln authorized his bloody march to the sea, where the Union troops made war on the civilian population—a ghastly revision of Western military tradition that was extended by the wars of the twentieth century.

After General Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House in April, 1865, the high moral ground of abolitionism became the North's justification for Reconstruction and the political suppression of Southern culture. The South's Christian leaders subsequently defended the Confederacy as the preserver of Christian civilization against Unitarian aggression. But the pre-war defense of slavery as the primary cause of the South's secession was forgotten in the South. So was the fact that abolitionism had not been the primary cause of the North's aggression.

The Northern press had proclaimed abolitionism as the high moral ground. The South had taken the Northern press at its word—its flood of words. Lincoln was willing in 1860 to allow eddies of the moral tide of abolitionism to push his canoe down the rapids of Presidential politics, but abolitionism was a means to an end for him. His end was getting elected. This was not high moral ground, but it is surely a major part of the American political tradition, then as now.

D. The Confederate Constitution (1861)

So vital was the issue of slavery that the Constitution of the Confederate States of America (March 11, 1861), devoted considerable space to the defense of slavery.

> ARTICLE IV
>
> Sec. 2. (I) The citizens of each State shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States; and shall have the right

16. Richard E. Beringer, *et al., Why the South Lost the Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), ch. 16.

17. The South's leadership in 1860 was Calvinistic: Presbyterian and Episcopalian. In 1890, it was fundamentalist.

18. Its view of slavery.

19. From gentility to populism and racism. C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).

of transit and sojourn in any State of this Confederacy, with their slaves and other property; and the right of property in said slaves shall not be thereby impaired. . . .

(3) No slave or other person held to service or labor in any State or Territory of the Confederate States, under the laws thereof, escaping or lawfully carried into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor; but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such slave belongs,. or to whom such service or labor may be due.

Sec. 3. (I)

(3) The Confederate States may acquire new territory; and Congress shall have power to legislate and provide governments for the inhabitants of all territory belonging to the Confederate States, lying without the limits of the several Sates; and may permit them, at such times, and in such manner as it may by law provide, to form States to be admitted into the Confederacy. In all such territory the institution of negro slavery, as it now exists in the Confederate States, shall be recognized and protected be Congress and by the Territorial government; and the inhabitants of the several Confederate States and Territories shall have the right to take to such Territory any slaves lawfully held by them in any of the States or Territories of the Confederate States.

So vital was domestic slave breeding as an economic factor in the South's plantation economy that the Constitution dealt with the need to maintain a closed market for slave breeders. It did so by extending the 1808 prohibition against imported African slaves, which showed deference to England's anti-slavery efforts, and also by authorizing Congress to prohibit the import of slaves from non-African sources.

ARTICLE I

Sec. 9. (I) The importation of negroes of the African race from any foreign country other than the slaveholding States or Territories of the United States of America, is hereby forbidden; and Congress is required to pass such laws as shall effectually prevent the same.

(2) Congress shall also have power to prohibit the introduction of slaves from any State not a member of, or Territory not belonging to, this Confederacy.[20]

Robert H. Smith, who represented Alabama in framing the Constitution, and whose name appears on it, made clear in 1861 what the central issue was.

We have dissolved the late Union chiefly because of the negro quarrel. Now, is there any man who wished to reproduce that strife among our-

20. Constitution of the Confederate States of America (March 11, 1861).

> selves? And yet does not he, who wished the slave trade left for the action of Congress, see that he proposed to open a Pandora's box among us and to cause our political arena again to resound with this discussion. Had we left the question unsettled, we should, in my opinion, have sown broadcast the seeds of discord and death in our Constitution. I congratulate the country that the strife has been put to rest forever, and that American slavery is to stand before the world as it is, and on its own merits. We have now placed our domestic institution, and secured its rights unmistakably, in the Constitution; we have sought by no euphony to hide its name—we have called our negros "slaves," and we have recognized and protected them as persons and our rights to them as property.[21]

The word "tariff" does not appear in the Constitution. There was a prohibition on export taxes imposed by any state, unless Congress voted by two-thirds to authorize this (Art. I, Sec. 9, subsec. 7.)

The space devoted to slavery, when compared to the space devoted to tariffs in the foundational document of the Confederacy, makes clear what the central cause of secession was: the defense of slavery. It was Sherman's victory in Atlanta in the fall of 1864 that began to shift retroactively the South's apologetic for secession from slavery to state's rights and tariff reduction.

The evidence is overwhelming: the respected public defenders of the South's act of secession placed the preservation of chattel slavery at the top of their list of justifications. Remove this one factor, and there would not have been secession.

E. Southern Slavery and the Family

From the beginning of African chattel slavery in the late seventeenth century, Southern slave owners sold their slaves to other slave owners. They bred slaves for personal use and for sale. This was what slave owners in the Roman Empire had done in the era of Augustus, after the importation of slaves declined because of the absence of new wars of empire.

The South's professional slave breeders received a domestic monopoly when the United States government and the British Navy both began to enforce the law against the importation of slaves. After 1808, the year that the importation of slaves was made illegal in the United States, the only legal source of slaves was the domestic slave economy.

21. Hon. Robert H. Smith, *An Address to the Citizens of Alabama on the Constitution and Laws of the Confederate States of America* (Mobile, 1861), p. 19; cited in Marshall L. DeRosa, *The Confederate Constitution of 1861: An Inquiry into American Constitutionalism* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1991), p. 66.

Southern states did not recognize the marriage of slaves as a legally binding covenant that had to be defended in civil courts. Arnold Sio summarized the legal situation:

> Legal marriage meant, in conjunction with the rule that the child follow the condition of the mother, that the offspring of slaves had no legal father, whether the father was slave or free. The duration of the union between slaves depended on the interests of the master or those of the slaves. The union was subject at any time to being dissolved by the sale of one or both of the slaves. The children of these "contubernial relationships," as they were termed, had no legal protection against separation from their parents. In the law there was no such thing as fornication or adultery among slaves. A slave could not be charged with adultery, and a male slave had no legal recourse against another slave, free Negro, or white person for intercourse with his "wife." Nor could the slave present this abuse as evidence in his defense in a criminal charge of assault and battery, or murder.[22]

In 1853, a North Carolina Supreme Court justice wrote that "our law requires no solemnity or form in regard to the marriage of slaves, and whether they 'take up' with each other by express permission of their owners, or from a mere impulse of nature, in obedience to the command 'multiply and replenish the earth,' cannot, in the contemplation of the law, make any sort of difference."[23]

Slave owners actively encouraged their slaves' sexual unions. Owners for generations harvested crops of slaves. Owners broke up families by selling slave family members "down the river." Slave-breeding became a major source of income for slave owners in the eastern seaboard regions of the South after 1807, where the soil had become depleted and agricultural output had declined. They sold slaves into the deep South, where the soil was far more productive for cotton growing.[24]

Slave breeding involved the legalization of fornication among slaves in order to provide additional plantation income. The American South's cotton-exporting economy rested on fornication among slaves. The South's plantation economy after 1807 became dependent on slave breeding rather than open conquest by kidnappers chieftains in West Africa. Slave breeding was economically productive. Slaves

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22. Arnold A. Sio, "Interpretations of Slavery," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, VII (April 1965); reprinted in Allen Weinstein and Frank Otto Gatall (eds.), *American Negro Slavery: A Modern Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 315.

23. Cited in Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* (New York: Pantheon, 1976), p. 52.

24. Alfred H. Conrad and John R. Meyer, "The Economics of Slavery in the AnteBellum South," *Journal of Economic History* (1958); reprinted in Hugh G. J. Aitken (ed.), *Did Slavery Pay?* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971).

multiplied in the South, unlike the West Indies, where slaves did not achieve their own biological replacement rate. For as long as the land in the deep South remained productive, there would be a market for the slaves bred on plantations in the poor-soil Piedmont districts in the eastern South.

Socially, the South unofficially adopted the legalization of adultery: white male slave owners and black female slaves. Neither slave husbands/fathers and their victimized wives/daughters nor white wives had any legal recourse in either church courts or civil courts. The color of American slaves and their heirs lightened through the generations, making them stand out visibly in a group of Africans. This was not the result of widespread inter-racial marriage, which was illegal in the South until the second half of the twentieth century, a change that came as a result of Northern politics and court decisions.

After 1660, with the steady replacement of white indentured servitude by permanent black slavery, the South's social order within the upper classes was based on the selective legalization of rape and adultery. By ignoring the rape-adultery-seduction-fornication aspects of the denial of marriage to slaves, the Christian South simultaneously undermined the white family and prevented the formation of slave families. The ideal of the family as a covenantal institution to be protected by church courts and civil courts was never accepted in the South for slave owners or their slaves.

This was not admitted by the South's theologians in 1860, and it is also not mentioned by the retroactive defenders of Antebellum South today. This conspiracy of silence is now over three centuries old. The South's plantation society was a white patriarchy that put white women on a pedestal. Then the patriarchs and their unmarried sons spent nights in the slave quarters. Wives, firmly secured to their pedestals, were expected to stay as silent as statues about this arrangement, which they did. Mary Chesnut, the wife of Confederate General (and former U.S. Senator) James Chesnut of South Carolina, observed in her diary:

> This *only* I see: like the patriarchs of old our men live all in one house with their wives & their concubines, & the Mulattoes one sees in every family exactly resemble the white children—& every lady tells you who is the father of all the Mulatto children in every body's household, but those in her own, she seems to think drop from the clouds or pretends so to think.[25]

25. C. Vann Woodward and Elisabeth Muhlenfeld (eds.), *The Private Mary Chesnut: The Unpublished Civil War Diaries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 42.

The South had no appeals court system, civil or ecclesiastical, that was willing to deal with the seduction or rape of black slave women by white males of the owner's family. The South's laws did not authorize marriage among slaves, yet sexual cohabitation was encouraged by slave owners to produce a continuing crop of future slaves. Southern slavery was an economic system self-consciously built on economically profitable bastardy.

Southern slavery was institutionalized fornication for the blacks and institutionalized adultery for the whites. The South's civil codes turned a blind eye to the fornication aspect, and winked its other eye at the adultery aspect. On the issue of the integrity of the family, the South's civil codes shook the region's collective fist in the face of God for almost two centuries, daring God to do something about it. God replied, 1861–77. Southerners should have seen what would happen.

> Yet they say, The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know? (Ps. 94:7–10)

I Timothy 6:1–5[26] was used by Dabney to challenge the spirit of abolitionism.[27] He understood correctly that this passage places the burden of proof on Christian abolitionists. Dabney's critique of abolitionism in general did nothing to prove that slavery, as practiced by the South, was in any way validated by the Bible. There were also civil laws in some Southern states against teaching a slave to read, even if this instruction was given so that the slave could read the Bible. That Paul allowed slavery makes the case for abolitionism difficult, but it does not make the case against Southern slavery diffirverse, anti-Christian, anti-family, but economically profitable until the North won the war in 1865. Then it was gone with the wind.

F. The Origin of Abolitionism

With respect to the moral legitimacy of private chattel slavery, Christian commentators have offered very few suggestions regarding the millennia-long misreading—now almost universally regarded as

26. Chapter 8.

27. Robert L. Dabney, *A Defense of Virginia [And Through Her, of the South]* (Harrisonburg, Virginia: Sprinkle, [1867] 1977), p. 186. The book was written during the Civil War but published two years after the war ended, when almost no one else with any influence was willing to defend slavery retroactively.

a misreading—of the biblical texts. The vast majority of America's Protestant Bible commentators since at least 1865 have reversed the older opinion regarding the legitimacy of slavery, but seemingly not on the basis of a careful reconsideration of the relevant biblical texts. This reversal subjects them to a series of uncomfortable accusations: (1) the abolitionist movement undermined the Bible's standards, and therefore should still be opposed; slavery should be legalized; (2) the Bible is morally wrong; (3) situational ethics can and should govern Christianity and civilization. With respect to the case against abolitionism, Christian commentators who have called for complete abolition have been on the defensive exegetically for two centuries.

In the early nineteenth century, when the abolitionist movement became an international phenomenon in the West, Christians who defended the legitimacy of slavery could and did appeal to First Timothy 6:1–2. If slavery is inherently immoral, they asked, why did Paul tell Christian slaves to obey their masters? Why didn't he tell Christian masters to free their slaves?

For seventeen centuries after Paul wrote these words, no Christian church formally called for the abolition of slavery. Then, in the second half of the eighteenth century, the Society of Friends (Quakers) began to question slave ownership among its members. This escalated rapidly to the Friends' call for state-mandated abolition. Before the century was over, evangelical Protestants in England had taken up the cause of abolition. John Newton, a former slave ship captain—before and after his conversion to Christ in 1748—became a pastor and a writer of hymns, most famously, *Amazing Grace*. Late in his pastoral career, in the early 1780's, he became an abolitionist. Newton influenced a member of Parliament, William Wilberforce (1759–1833), his old friend, to become a political reformer. Wilberforce publicly took up the abolitionist cause by introducing a bill to indict the slave trade in 1788. In 1833, less than a week before Wilberforce died, slavery in the British Empire was abolished by the British Parliament as the result of Wilberforce's efforts for over four decades. By the 1880's, slavery had universally been abolished by law (and the British Navy) in the West. An institution that had been acceptable in almost every society in history was abandoned in the West in a little over one hundred years. Nevertheless, within half a century of the abolition of slavery in Brazil, private chattel servitude was replaced by state slavery in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. The concentration camp replaced the slaves' hut.

Prior to the late eighteenth century, Christian defenders of slavery did not devote much time or effort to a philosophical defense of the institution. Slavery seemed secure, the legacy of a long tradition across the globe. It seemed almost as natural as the family—indeed, an extension of the family. Throughout the Christian tradition, a few theologians had written about the negative effects of slavery on slaves. Among free men, slavery had always been seen as a curse to be avoided personally. Presumably, slaves—who rarely left written records—would have agreed. But no organized group within the church had attempted to mobilize a campaign against slavery. This was equally true in Judaism and Islam. I have already surveyed this story in a lengthy chapter in *Tools of Dominion*.[28]

G. Abolitionism as a Protestant Religious Movement

Unitarians were the major intellectual spokesmen for the American abolitionist movement after 1830, but the movement's shock troops were raised up by Northern evangelists, such as the Tappan brothers.[29] Abolitionism was not at the forefront of the national revival known as the Second Great Awakening, 1800–1850, but it became a recurring issue beneath the surface after 1820. As time went on, it appeared sporadically on the surface.

Prior to the second half of the eighteenth century, there had been no concerted, organized effort by abolitionists in recorded history. Slavery was an accepted institution with an ancient history. Christians, Jews, and Moslems—"people of the Book"—all agreed: slavery had been authorized by the Old Testament. This authorization had not been changed in their respective commentaries on the Old Testament: the New Testament, the Talmud, and the Koran.

The reversal of opinion in Christianity and Judaism, 1750–1880, was unprecedented. The historian David Brion Davis has devoted his distinguished career to a study of the idea of slavery. He has commented on the extraordinary change in public opinion that took place in the West, 1770–1880.

> As late as the 1770s, when the Quaker initiative finally led to a rash of militant antislavery publications on both sides of the Atlantic, no realistic leader could seriously contemplate the abolition of New World slavery—

28. Gary North, *Tools of Dominion: The Case Laws of Exodus* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), ch. 4.

29. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery* (Cleveland, Ohio: Case Western Reserve University, 1969).

> except, on the analogy with European slavery and serfdom, over a span of centuries. Yet in 1808, only thirty-five years after a delegation of British Quakers had failed to persuade the Lord of Trade to allow Virginia to levy a prohibitive tax on further slave imports, Britain outlawed the African slave trade. Twenty-six years later, Britain emancipated some 780,000 colonial slaves, paying 20 million pounds compensation to their supposed owners. Only ninety years separated the first, cautious moves of the Philadelphia Quakers from the emancipation edicts of France and Denmark (1848), which left Brazil, Cuba, Surinam, and the southern United States as the only important slaveholding societies in the New World. It was barely a century after the founding of the London Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade (1787), sixty-one years after the final abolition of slavery in New York State (1827), that Brazil freed the last black slaves in the New World. . . . From any historical perspective, this was a stupendous transformation. . . . From the distance of the late twentieth century, however, the progress of emancipation from the 1780s to the 1880s is one of the most extraordinary events in history.[30]

It is unlikely that the South could have preserved slavery, given the tidal shift in public opinion. The South in 1860 clung fiercely to an institution that was still flourishing economically, but which could not easily spread west of Edgewood, Texas.[31] The inevitable soil depletion associated with mono-crop cotton farming meant a falling rate of return for slave owners and slave breeders. When the soil became depleted, as had happened in the Piedmont, so did the economic output of slavery. This is why Piedmont's slave owners had become commercial slave breeders.

The South's social order was built on an institution that could not have survived either economically or socially, as the next two decades proved in the West. The South's leaders openly defined the Southern way of life in terms of the economic superiority of slavery, as well as its moral legitimacy. The hard-liners who led the South in 1860 could not see that their moral defense of an economically doomed institution was equally doomed. They preferred to secede in the name of their right to preserve a moral abomination. The South chose a course of action in 1860–61 that turned out to be political suicide,

30. David Brion Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 108.

31. Look at a map. Edgewood is a few miles east of Dallas. As you drive toward Dallas, the trees that had stretched from the Atlantic to Edgewood begin to thin out. Rain and soil conditions west of Edgewood are not conducive to cotton farming. Then look north. You find prairie. Slavery was not easily enforceable on the farms of the prairie, and surely would not have been enforceable after McCormick's reaper appeared, expanding the size of farms and reducing the number of farmers.

rather than voluntarily surrender an institution that everyone in the South except Robert Dabney turned from in retroactive disgust no later than May, 1865.

The South in 1864–65 learned social ethics from William Tecumseh Sherman. He was a savage teacher.

Conclusion

It was not clear Constitutionally in 1860 whether a state legally could secede. James Madison and the Federalists of 1787 were careful never to discuss publicly this aspect of the Constitution. Had they publicly adopted Lincoln's no-secession position, the Constitution would never have been ratified. In 1861, the right of secession was still an open issue in Constitutional theory.

It was a civil war from the beginning because it was a war to control the government's tax revenues. South Carolina demanded the right to collect tariffs at the Port of Charleston. The rest of the South then joined with South Carolina to divvy up the tax revenues from all of the ports, and escape the whiskey tax, too.

Lincoln would not allow this. He went to war for two reasons: his commitment to the idea of the Union, which he repeated publicly over and over, and his commitment to collect the tariff, which he rarely mentioned in public. Most historians have neglected the second issue.

The sovereign right to collect tariffs was no one's high moral ground, North or South. Neither side admitted that tariff-collection was Lincoln's immediate motivation to send U.S. Navy ships to Charleston. Both sides regarded this issue—the issue that made that war a true civil war—as too trivial for the purpose of mobilizing the troops to fight and die for.

Remove chattel slavery from the list of causes of the war of 1861–65, and it is just about inconceivable that the war would have begun. Southern states seceded in 1861 in order to escape what their leaders perceived would be the likely political effects of the North's abolitionist movement after Lincoln's election. But the flash point for the South was John Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry in 1859. The Northern press was solidly behind Brown, presenting him as a martyr. Lincoln's election in 1860 confirmed the South's worst fears.

England had settled the moral issue of slavery without war, but few slave owners had lived in England. They lived in the West Indies. They had been part of an economic interest, but were not an integral

part of the nation. They did not have the military ability to threaten secession. So, they accepted Parliament's manumission money. In the United States, however, slave owners had been among the primary framers of the Constitution. The South was a major voting bloc. The chief Constitutional issue in 1860—the right of a state to secede—had always been disputed by scholars and politicians. This legal issue was settled once, though not necessarily for all, on the battlefield—or, more precisely, approximately 10,400 battlefields. It took the lives of 620,000 combatants to settle it. John Brown won the Civil War his way. The action was the reaction.